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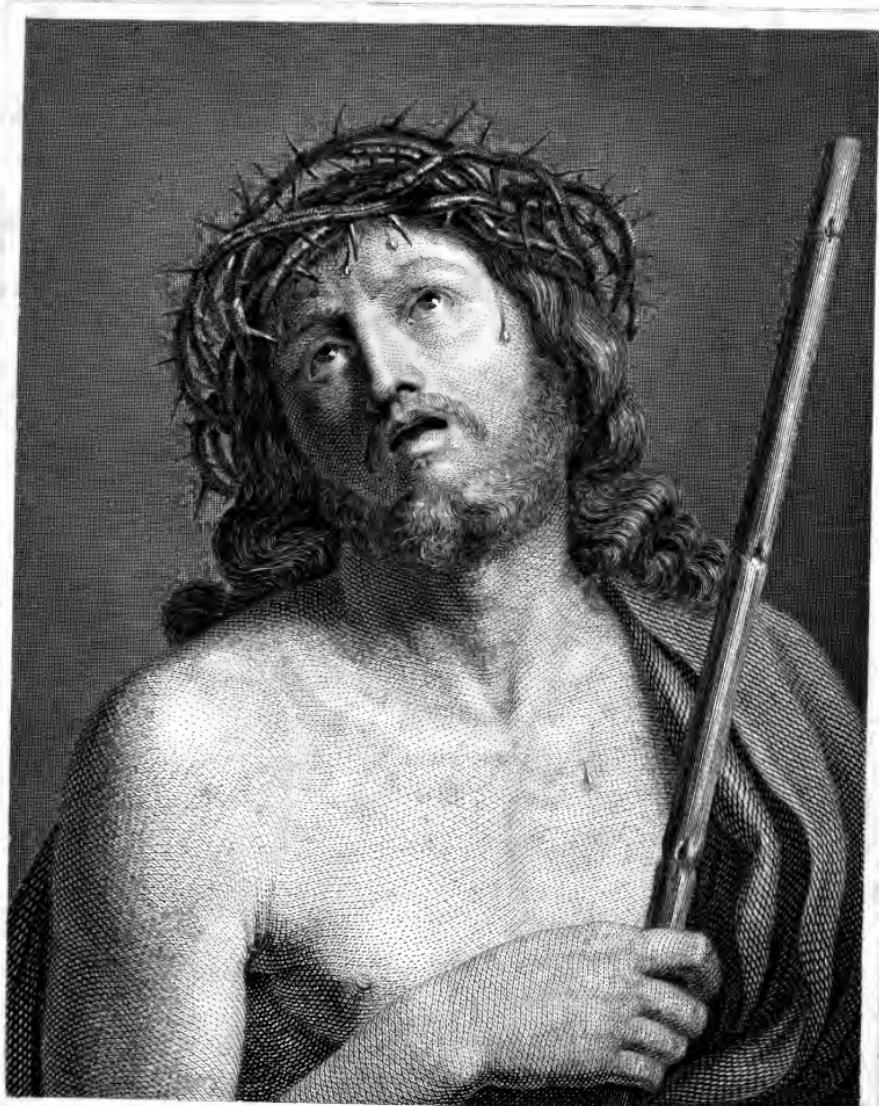


OF THE IMITATION OF
JESUS CHRIST

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Imitatio Christi. English

OF THE IMITATION OF



esus



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TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN ORIGINAL

ASCRIBED TO THOMAS A KEMPIS

BY T. F. DIBDIN D. D.



London

WILLIAM PICKERING

1851

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

TN presenting the Public with another version of this celebrated performance, it has not been with the intention of entering into competition with preceding Translators. On the contrary, I have in a great measure adopted the version of JOHN PAYNE: but with such modifications and corrections as may probably entitle the present to the distinction of a NEW TRANSLATION. It was my original intention to have implicitly adopted the version of DEAN STANHOPE; but on carefully comparing it with the Latin Original, I found it to be so loose and paraphrastic, not to say, in many instances, faithless, that I was compelled to reject it entirely.

With all its faults, which are those of redundancy, and an excess of ornament, the version of PAYNE has decidedly great merit.

It may be expected that I should say something of the intrinsic character of the Work to which

the attention of the Public is here particularly directed: and yet, it were difficult to select a work of which so little need be said in the way of recommendation. The “IMITATION OF CHRIST” has been familiar to the christian world, in a printed form, upwards of *three centuries and a half*. It has been the manual of the Student in almost every language to which the typographical art could be made subservient. It has equally enriched the shelves of the monastery and the cabinets both of humble and costly Collectors. Scarcely any period of human life has been judged to be exempt from receiving the consolation which this excellent performance is capable of imparting; and the voices of the learned and unlearned have been loud and unanimous in its praise.

It will follow, therefore, that a work, of which the attestations of its popularity are so indisputable and extraordinary, should possess **GREAT INTRINSIC MERIT**: should *really* be found to contain that religious instruction and consolation which has been so long considered to be its chief excellence. This brings me to say a few words upon what is humbly conceived to be the leading features of such excellence of character.

In the first place, its *simplicity*, both of thought and of style, is remarkable: a simplicity, not involving a poverty of ideas, or a mere repetition of established axioms or truths in morality and

religion :—but clear, just, and at times equally powerful and convincing, in its views of man's relative situation with his Maker, and of the Christian dispensation. The style of the author cannot, it must be confessed, be defended on the score of classical purity. It abounds with words and phrases of the middle ages, and those not always of the choicest selection. Yet it may be questioned whether a style more polished and ornate would have so well accorded with the character of the work itself. Such pregnancy of thought with such brevity of expression have been rarely exhibited ; and if *terseness* of composition be alone considered, the author of the work "*De Imitatione Christi*" may be called the **TACITUS** of monastic writers.

Secondly, in regard to the sentiments or principles of the Work. These appear to be, upon the whole, of the purest description. Although occasionally tinged by the peculiarities of monastic discipline, and ascetic severity, they are so grounded upon spiritual doctrine :—they evince such an intimate and extensive knowledge of the sacred text—they apply so forcibly to "all sorts and conditions of men," in almost every vicissitude of such "condition"—they address themselves so readily and so irresistibly to our hearts—that it is impossible not to admit them to be entitled to all the commendation which they have so long and so lavishly received.

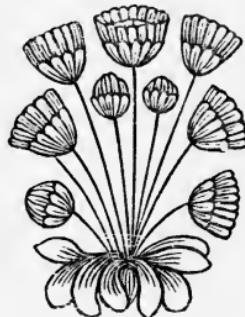
There is *one* peculiarity or praise which this Work appears to me eminently to possess ; it is, in its minute and severe scrutiny of the human heart ; in stripping it of all its offensive follies and vices ; and in accustoming it, by means of such a salutary process, to appreciate justly the importance of SELF-EXAMINATION, and of humiliation before its Maker. Those who have the courage to institute self-interrogatories, will not fly from a source so capable, as is this Work, of affording them HONEST ANSWERS. It is true that, at times, the author appears to be overwhelmed, even unto desolation of spirit, on the contemplation of man's natural infirmity and sin ; but, as Mr. Butler has very beautifully as well as justly observed, “ his expressions must not be “ understood in their strict sense : they are the “ language of a soul whom God raised to a view, “ not ordinarily given in this life, of his adorable “ perfections. Such a soul has an exquisite sense “ of the beauty, the wisdom, and the justice, of “ the divine will ; and consequently, considers “ every deviation from it, though no greater than “ one of those failings into which the just man “ falls seven times a day, as an act of heinous “ rebellion.”

Another very peculiar feature in the composition of this Work, ought on no account to be overlooked ; and I notice it with the expression of no small surprise—for, as far as I have had the

means of ascertaining, it seems to have escaped the observation of all preceding translators and editors. I allude to the omission of all mention of the *Intercession of the Virgin* to obtain forgiveness of sins. While such a feature—in the composition of a writer bred in the doctrines of the Church of Rome—cannot fail to render this work very remarkable, it must, at the same time, make it the more acceptable to a Protestant reader: and perhaps may account, in some degree, for its favourable reception among readers of almost every religious persuasion.

The Reader will not fail to observe the omission of the *Fourth Book* of the *Imitation*, which treats of the **SACRAMENT**. Such omission has not been hastily resolved upon: and it will perhaps be thought a curious coincidence that the *first* and *last* English version of this Work should contain only the first three Books. But it was impossible, even were the sanction of good critics wanting, to conclude that the author of the first three, could also have been that of the fourth, book “of the *Imitation*,” &c. There is palpable intrinsic evidence to disprove it. Both the style and the sentiments are strikingly different. There is, in the treatise on the **Sacrament**, (to say nothing of the principles of the Romish **EUCHARIST**, so repugnant to the feelings of a Protestant Reader) more mysticism; more vague rapture; more elaboration of com-

position, and expansion of imagery. It is wanting in that simple, close, convincing mode of reasoning and of expression which characterises the preceding books. I have therefore, after the example of Dr. Chalmers, rejected it without hesitation or regret.





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Of the Imitation of *Christ*.

BOOK THE FIRST.

Preparatory Instructions for the Spiritual Life.

CHAPTER I.

Of the Contempt of worldly Vanities.

HE that followeth me shall not walk John viii. in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life. These are the words of CHRIST; by which we are taught that it is only by a conformity to his Life and Spirit, that we can be truly enlightened, and delivered from all blindness of heart: let it, therefore, be the principal employment of our minds to meditate on the LIFE OF CHRIST.

2. The doctrine of CHRIST infinitely transcends all the doctrines of the holiest men; and those who have the Spirit of CHRIST, may find

Rev. ii. 17. in it *hidden manna*. But it happens that many, though they frequently hear His doctrine, feel no pleasure in it. *He* only can cordially receive and truly delight in the doctrine of CHRIST, who

Rom. viii. 9. continually endeavours to acquire the Spirit and imitate the Life of CHRIST.

3. Of what benefit are thy most subtil disquisitions into the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, if thou art destitute of humility, and, therefore, a profaner of the Trinity? It is not profound speculations, but a holy life, that makes a man righteous and good, and dear to GOD. I had rather *feel* compunction, than be able to give the most accurate *definition* of it. If thy memory could retain the whole Bible, and the

1 Cor. xiii. 2. precepts of all the philosophers, what would it profit thee, without Charity and the Grace of

Eccles. i. 2. GOD? *Vanity of vanities! all is vanity!*—except only the love of GOD, and an entire devotedness to His service.

4. *That* is the highest wisdom, which, by the contempt of the world, presses us forward towards the Kingdom of Heaven. It is, therefore, vanity, to labour for perishing riches, and to place our confidence in their possession: vanity, to hunt after honours, and raise ourselves to an exalted station: vanity, to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, and indulge desires that begin and end in torment: vanity, to wish that life may be long, and to have no concern whether it be

good : vanity, to mind only the present world, and not to look forward to that which is to come ; to suffer our affections to hover over a state, in which all things pass away with the swiftness of thought, and not to raise them to that where true joy abideth for ever.

5. Frequently call to mind the observation of Solomon, that *the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing* ; and let it be thy continual endeavour to withdraw thy heart from the love of *the things that are seen*, and to turn it wholly to *the things that are not seen* : for he who lives in subjection to the sensual desires of animal nature, defiles his spirit and loses the Grace of GOD.

Ecclus. i. 8.

CHAPTER II.

Of Humility, with respect to Intellectual Attainments.

 VERY man naturally desires to increase in knowledge ; but what doth knowledge profit, without the fear of the LORD ? Better is the humble peasant, that serveth GOD, than the proud philosopher, who, destitute of the knowledge of himself, can describe the course of the planets. He that truly knows himself, becomes vile in his own eyes,

Aug. Conf.
lib. v. 4.

1 Cor. xiii. 2. and has no delight in the praise of man. If I knew all that the world contains, and had not Charity; what would it avail me in the sight of GOD, who will judge me according to my deeds?

Eccles. i. 17. 2. Rest from an inordinate desire of knowledge, for it is subject to much perplexity and delusion. Learned men are fond of the notice of the world, and desire to be accounted wise: but there are many things, the knowledge of which has no tendency to promote the recovery of our first Divine life; and it is, surely, a proof of folly, to devote ourselves wholly to that, with which our supreme good has no connexion. The soul is not to be satisfied with the multitude of words; but a holy life refresheth the

1 Tim. iii. 9. mind, and a pure conscience is the foundation of a firm and immoveable confidence in GOD.

3. The more thou knowest, and the better thou understandest, the more severely wilt thou be judged, unless thy life be proportionably holy. Be not, therefore, exalted, for any uncommon skill in any art or science; but let the superior knowledge that is given thee, make thee more fearful, and more watchful over thyself. If thou supposest that thou knowest many things, and hast perfect understanding of them, consider, how many more things there are which thou knowest not at all; and, instead of being exalted with a high opinion of thy great knowledge, be

rather disposed to confess thy ignorance. And why dost thou prefer thyself to another, since thou mayest find many who are more learned than thou art, and better instructed in the law of GOD?

4. If thou wouldest learn and know that which is truly useful, love to be unknown, and to be held in no estimation: for the highest and most profitable learning is the knowledge and contempt of ourselves. To have no opinion of our own merit, and always to think well and highly of others, is an evidence of great wisdom and perfection. Therefore, though thou seeſt another openly offend, or even commit some enormous sin, yet thou must not from thence take occasion to value thyself for superior goodness; for thou canſt not tell how long thou wilt be able to persevere in virtue. We are all *frail*; but thou shouldest reckon none more frail than thyself.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Knowledge of Truth.

 APPY the man whom TRUTH teacheth, not by obscure figures and transient sounds, but by shewing herself to be such as she really is. The perceptions of our senses are narrow and dull, and our reasoning on those perceptions frequently misleads us. To what purpose are our keenest disputations on hidden and obscure subjects, for our ignorance of which we shall not be brought into judgment at the latter day? How extravagant the folly, to neglect the study of the *one thing needful*; and wholly devote our time and faculties to that which is not only vainly curious, but sinful, and dangerous as the state of *those that have eyes and see not!*

2. And what have redeemed souls to do with the distinctions and subtleties of logic? He whom the ETERNAL WORD condescendeth to teach, is disengaged at once from the labyrinth of human opinions. For *of ONE WORD are all things*; and all things, without voice or language, speak Him alone. He is that Divine principle which speaketh in our hearts; and, without which, there can be neither just appre-

henfion, nor right judgment. Now he to whom all things are but this ONE, who comprehendeth all things in His Will, and beholdeth all things in His Light, hath *his heart fixed*, and abideth in the peace of GOD.

3. O GOD, who art the TRUTH, make me John xiv. 6. one with Thee in everlasting love! I am often weary of reading, and of hearing many things. In Thee alone, is the sum of all my desires. Let all teachers be silent; let the whole creation be dumb before Thee; and do Thou only speak unto my foul.

4. The more any one is united to God in himself, and advanced in singleness and simplicity of heart, the more readily will he comprehend numerous and loftier things without the effort of study; because he receives the light of understanding from above. A spirit pure, simple, and constant, is not, like Martha, distracted and troubled about many things; because, inwardly at rest, it seeketh not its own glory in what it does, but, *doth all to the glory of GOD*: for there is no other cause of perplexity and disquiet, but an unsubdued will and unmortified affections. A holy and spiritual man, by reducing these to the rule and standard of his own mind, becomes the master of all his outward acts; he does not suffer himself to be led by them to the indulgence of any inordinate affections that terminate in self, but subjects them to

the unalterable judgment of an inspired and sanctified spirit.

5. Who hath a harder conflict to endure, than he who labours to subdue himself? But in this we must be continually engaged, if we would be more strengthened in the Inner Man, and make real progress towards perfection. Indeed, the highest perfection we can attain to in the present state, is allayed with much imperfection; and our best knowledge is obscured by the shades of ignorance. *We see through a glass, darkly.* An humble knowledge of thyself, therefore, is a more certain way of leading thee to GOD, than the most profound investigations of science. Science, however, or a proper knowledge of the things that belong to the present life, is so far from being blameable in itself, that it is good, and ordained of GOD; but purity of conscience, and holiness of life, must ever be preferred before it. And because men are more solicitous to learn much, than to live well, they fall into error, and receive little or no benefit from their studies. O that the same diligence were exerted to eradicate vice and implant virtue, as are applied to the discussion of unprofitable questions, and the *vain strife of words!*—so much daring wickedness would not be found among the common ranks of men, nor so much licentiousness disgrace those who live in monasteries. Assuredly, in the approaching day of judgment,

it will not be inquired of us what we have *read*, but what we have *done*; not how eloquently we have spoken, but how holily we have lived.

6. Tell me, where are now those learned Doctors and Professors, who, while the honours of literature were blooming around them, you so well knew and so highly reverenced? Their benefices are possessed by others, who scarcely have them in remembrance. While living, they seemed to be something: but dead, the tongue is utterly silent about them. O how suddenly passeth away the glory of this world! Had these men been as solicitous to be holy, as they were to be learned, their studies might have been blest with that honour which cannot be f ullied, and with that happiness which cannot be interrupted. How many perish in this life through a love of false science, and by a neglect of God's service! And because they choose to be counted great, rather than humble, they are consumed, as it were, in their vain imaginations. Rom. i. 21. He is truly great who hath a great charity. He is truly great, who is small in his own account; and who considers the height of worldly honours as nothing. He is truly wise, who *counts all earthly things but as dung, that he may win CHRIST*: and he is truly learned, who abandons his own will, and does the will of GOD. Phil. iii. 8.

CHAPTER IV.

Of Prudence with respect to our Opinions and Actions.

John i. 4.



E must not believe every word or every suggestion of the spirit; but consider and examine all things with reference to GOD. Shame upon human nature!—we more readily believe and speak ill of our fellow-creatures than good. Such is our deplorable weakness. But a holy man is not forward to give credit to the reports of others; because he is sensible of the infirmity of nature, and of its proneness to evil, and to falsehood in the use of speech.

2. It is an evidence of true wisdom, not to be precipitate in our actions, nor pertinacious and inflexible in our opinions; and it is a part of the same wisdom, not to give hasty credit to every word that is spoken, nor immediately to communicate to others what we have heard, or even what we believe. Always take counsel of a prudent and conscientious man; and choose rather to be guided by the advice of one better than yourself, than to follow the suggestions of your own blind will.

3. A good life makes a man wise according

to the Divine Wisdom, and enlargeth his experience in many things: and the more humble his spirit is, and the more subject and resigned to GOD, the more wise will he become in the conduct of outward life, and the more undisturbed in the possession of himself.

Tobit iv. 19.

CHAPTER V.

Of Reading the Holy Scriptures.

 OT Eloquence, but Truth, is to be sought after in the Holy Scriptures; every part of which ought to be read with the same spirit as that in which it was written. In these, as in all other books, it is improvement in holiness, not pleasure in the subtilty of the thought or sublimity of language, that must be principally regarded. We ought indeed to read those books that are simple and devout, with the same affection and delight as those of high speculation or profound erudition.

2. Whatever book thou readest, suffer not thy mind to be influenced by the character of the writer, whether his literary attainments be great or small; but let thy only motive to read, be, the pure love of Truth. Do not ask *who* Psalm said this or that, but attend closely to what *is* xxxviii. 7. *said*. Men pass away like the shadows of the

1 Pet. i. 24, 25. morning: but *the word of the LORD endureth for ever*; and that Word, without respect of persons, in infinitely various ways speaketh unto all.

3. The profitable reading of the Holy Scriptures is frequently interrupted by the vain curiosity of our own minds, which prompts us to examine and discuss, and labour to comprehend, those parts, that should be meekly and submissively passed over. To derive spiritual improvement from reading, we must read with humility, simplicity, and faith; and not affect the character of profound learning.

4. Ask freely, and receive silently and respectfully, the instructions of holy men: and let not the parables and allegories of ancient times disgust thee, for they were not written without meaning, and without design.

CHAPTER VI.

Of Inordinate Affections.

HE moment a man gives way to inordinate desire, disquietude and torment take possession of his heart. The proud and the covetous are never at rest; but the humble and the poor in spirit possess their souls in the plenitude of peace. He that is not perfectly dead to himself, is soon tempted and easily subdued, even in the most ordinary occurrences of life. The weak in spirit, who is yet carnal, and inclined to the pleasures of sense, finds great difficulty in withdrawing himself from earthly desires: he feels regret and sorrow as often as this abstraction is attempted; and every opposition to the indulgence of his ruling passion, easily kindleth his indignation.

2. If he succeed in the gratification of inordinate desire, he is immediately stung with remorse; for he has not only contracted the guilt of sin, but is wholly disappointed of the peace which he sought. It is, therefore, not by indulging, but by resisting our passions, that true peace of heart is to be found. Peace is not in the heart of a carnal man; nor is it the portion

Proverbs xviii. 14.
I. xlvi. 22.

Rom. viii. 5.

Gal. v. 22.

of him that is devoted to a worldly life: it dwells only with the humble and the spiritually minded.

CHAPTER VII.

Of Vain Hope, and Elation of Mind.



Pf. lx. 11.
cviii. 12.
2 Cor. iv. 5.

E that placeth his confidence in man, or in any created being, is vain, and trusteth in a shadow. Be not ashamed to serve thy brethren in the meanest offices, and to appear poor in the sight of men, for the love of JESUS CHRIST. Presume not upon the success of thine own endeavours, but place all thy hope in GOD. Do all that is in thy power with an upright intention, and GOD will assist your good inclinations. Trust not in thine own wisdom, nor in the wisdom and skill of any human being; but rather in the grace of GOD, who raiseth the humble, and humbleth the self-presuming.

2. Glory not in riches, although they increase upon thee; nor in thy friends, because they are powerful: but glory in GOD, who giveth thee riches, and friends, and all things; and, what is more than all, desireth to give thee Himself.

1 Cor. i. 31. Boast not of the strength or beauty of thy body, which a little sickness can weaken and deform.

Please not thyself with the acuteness of thy natural wit, and the sweetness of thy natural disposition, lest thou displease GOD, who is the author of all the good that nature hath given thee.

3. Do not think that thou art better than others, lest, in the sight of GOD, who only knoweth what is in man, thou be found worse. Be not proud of thy good works; for the judgment of GOD and the judgment of men are infinitely different; and that which displeasethth the former, is commonly pleasing to the latter. Whatever good thou art truly conscious of, think more highly of the good of others, that thou mayest preserve the humility of thy spirit. If thou place thyself lower than all mankind, it can do thee no hurt; but much hurt may be done by preferring thyself to a single individual. Perpetual peace dwelleth with the humble; but indignation and wrath frequently distract the heart of the proud.

John ii. 23.
Prov. xiii. 10.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of avoiding familiar Intercourse with the World.

Eccles. viii.

19.



PEN not thine heart to every man ;
but entrust its secrets to him only
that is wise and feareth GOD. Be
seldom in the company of young people and
strangers. Flatter not the rich ; nor love to be
seen in the presence of the great. Associate only
with the humble and simple, the holy and de-
vout ; and let thy conversation be on subjects
which tend only to edification. Be not fami-
liar with any woman, but recommend all good
women in common to the protection of GOD.
Wish to be familiar only with GOD and His
holy Angels, and shun the notice and intimacy
of men.

2. Charity is due to all ; but familiarity is
the right of none. It often happens that a
stranger, whom the voice of fame hath made
illustrious, loses all the brightness of his charac-
ter the moment he is seen and known. We
hope to please others, by entering into familiar
connexions with them ; and we presently dis-
gust them by the improper behaviour which
they discover in us.

Prov. xxv. 6.

Rom. xiv. 19.

CHAPTER IX.

Of Obedience and Subjection.

T is of importance to maintain obedience : to live under a Superior, and not depend upon oneself. Subjection is much safer than command. Many live in subjection, more from necessity than from the love of GOD ; and, therefore, pass a life of continual labour, and murmur on the most trifling occasions ; but they will not acquire liberty of spirit, 'till, with the whole heart, they are resigned to the will of GOD. Go where thou wilt, rest is not to be found but in a humble submission to the Divine will. A fond imagination of being easier in any place than that which Providence has assigned us, and a desire of change grounded upon it, are both deceitful and tormenting.

2. Men love to act from their own judgment, and are always most inclined to those who are of the same opinion with themselves : but if GOD dwell in our hearts, we shall find it necessary frequently to abandon our own sentiments for the comforts of peace. Who is so perfectly wise, as to comprehend the causes and connexions of all things ? Be not too confident,

1 Pet. ii. 13,
&c.
Ephes. vi. 6.
Rom. xiii. 5.

Prov. iii. 5.

Rom. xii. 16. therefore, in thine own judgment, but willingly hearken to the judgment of others. If you even discard your own opinion which may be good, and adopt another (not repugnant to what you know to be due to yourself) for the sake of pleasing GOD, you will receive the due advantage thereof.

Prov. xii. 15. 3. I have often heard, that it is more safe to take advice than to give it. In some instances, it may happen, that each man's opinion may be equally good; but to refuse submission to the opinion of another, when truth and the circumstances of the case require it, is a proof of a proud and an obstinate spirit.

CHAPTER X.

Of Superfluous Talking.



S much as lieth in thy power, shun the resorts of worldly men; for much conversation on secular business, however innocently managed, greatly retards the progress of the spiritual life. We are soon captivated, and are soon spoiled, by vain objects and employments. I have wished a thousand times, that I had either not been in company, or had been silent.

2. If it be asked, why we are so fond of talk-

ing upon, and mixing with, worldly matters—from which we so seldom return to silence and reflection without “a prick of conscience”—it must be answered, because, in the present life, we seek all our consolation, and, therefore, hope, by the amusements of company, to efface the impressions of sorrow, and repair the breaches of distraction; and because, of those things that we most love and desire, and of those that we most hate and would avoid, we are equally fond of thinking and of speaking.

3. But, alas! how frequently deceitful is this artificial management!—for the hope of consolation, from outward life, utterly destroys that inward and divine consolation which the HOLY SPIRIT gives us, and which is the only support of the soul under all its troubles. Watch and Matt. xxvi. pray therefore without ceasing, that no part of 41. your invaluable time may be thus idly sacrificed. Whenever it is proper and expedient to speak, let us speak those things which are good for Rom. xv. 2. edification.

It is an evil habit, and an inattention to our advance in virtue, which are the principal causes of our keeping no guard upon our lips. Spiritual conferences, however, are highly serviceable to spiritual improvement; especially when persons of one heart and one mind associate together in the fear and love of GOD. Prov. x. 19.

CHAPTER XI.

Of true Peace of Mind, and Zeal for Spiritual Improvement.

WE might enjoy much peace, if we did not busy our minds with what others do and say, in which we have no concern. How is it possible for that man to dwell long in peace, who is continually interested in the affairs of another? who runs abroad seeking occasions of disquietude, and who never or rarely turns to GOD in the retirement of a recollected spirit? Blessed are the simple in heart, for they shall possess the abundance of peace!

2. Whence was it that some of the saints became so contemplative and perfect, but because they continually studied, and endeavoured to mortify all earthly desires, so that they might, with their whole heart's strength, devote themselves to GOD, and freely give up their leisure to His service? But we are too much agitated by our own passions, and too sensibly affected by the pleasures of this transitory life: nay, so frigid or so lukewarm are our spirits, that we seldom overcome so much as one single vice.

Col. iii. 5.

3. If we were perfectly dead to ourselves, and free from all earthly solicitudes, we might

Rom. vi. 2.

then have some relish for Divine enjoyments, and begin to experience the blessedness of heavenly contemplation. But the principal and only impediment to such a state is, that we continue in subjection to our passions and desires, without making the least effort to enter into the narrow way which CHRIST hath pointed out as the one way of perfection. Thus, when any adversity, however trifling, comes upon us, we are soon dejected, and betake ourselves to human consolations: but did we endeavour, like valiant soldiers, to stand our ground in the hour of battle, we should feel the succour of the LORD descending upon us from Heaven: for He is always ready to assist those that resolutely strive, and place their whole confidence in the power of His mercy; nay, He creates occasions of contest, to bless us with so many opportunities of victory.

4. If the progress to perfection be placed only in external observances, our religion will quickly perish with the things on which it subsists: but the axe must be laid to the root of the tree, that, being separated and freed from the restless desires of nature and self, we may possess our souls in the peace of GOD.

5. If, every year, we did but extirpate ONE VICE, we should soon become perfect men: but we experience the sad reverse of this, and find that we were more contrite, more pure, more

Matt. iii. 10.

humble, and obedient, in the *beginning* of our conversation, than after many years profession of a religious life. The ardour of our affections should increase every day. But it is now thought to be some boast, if we are able to retain only some portion of our first ardour. If, however, we did but put a little restraint upon ourselves at the beginning, we should afterwards be enabled to do all things with ease and cheerfulness.

6. It is hard, indeed, to relinquish that to which we have been accustomed ; and harder still, to resist and deny our own will. But how can we hope to succeed in the *greatest* conflict, if we will not contend for victory in the *least* ? Resist, then, thine inordinate desires in their birth ; and continually lessen the power of thine evil habits ; lest, as they increase in strength as in indulgence, they lead you into greater difficulties, and grow at length too mighty to be subdued. Oh ! if thou didst but consider what peace thou wilt bring to thyself, and what joy thou wilt bring to others, by leading a life IN IMITATION of that of CHRIST, I think that thou wouldst be more solicitous for thy continual advancement toward spiritual perfection.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Use of Adversity.

IT is good for us that we sometimes suffer contrarieties and vexations; for they call a man back to the retirement of his heart, where only he finds, that, as he is an exile from his native home, he ought not to place his trust in any worldly enjoyment. It is good for us also to meet with contradiction and reproach; and to be evil thought of, and evil spoken of, even when our intentions are upright, and our actions blameless; for this keeps us humble, and is a powerful antidote to the poison of vain glory. Then chiefly it is, that we have recourse to the witness within us, which is GOD; when we are outwardly despised, and held in no esteem and favour among men. Job xvi. 20.

2. Our confidence in GOD ought to be so entire and absolute, that we should never think it necessary, in any kind of distress, to have recourse to human consolations. When a man of good intentions is sinking under adversity, or is disturbed and tempted by evil thoughts, he then feels the greater necessity of the Deity, without whom he then knows that he can do nothing of 2 Cor. i. 4. good: then he grieves and prays, and *groans*

71.

Pf. cxiv. 17,

19.

Rom. viii. 21. *to be delivered from the bondage of corruption ;*
 Phil. i. 23. *then, weary of life, he wishes to die, that he may depart, and be with CHRIST ;* and then,
 John xvi. 20. *he is fully convinced that absolute security and perfect rest are not compatible with his present state of existence.*

CHAPTER XIII.

Of Resisting Temptation.



S long as we continue in this world, we cannot possibly be free from tribulation and temptation : hence, in confirmation of this truth, it is written in Job, that *the life of man upon earth is a continual warfare.* Every one, therefore, ought to be attentive to the temptations that are peculiar to himself; and to persevere in watchfulness and prayer, lest

Job vii. 1. *his adversary, the devil, who never sleepeth, but continually goeth about seeking whom he may devour,* should find some unguarded place, whereby he may deceive him. No man, however perfect and holy, is exempt from occasional temptation. Temptation is the inevitable lot of mortality.

1 Peter v. 8.

2. But temptations, however dangerous and afflicting, are highly beneficial ; because, under their discipline, we are humbled, purified, and

instructed. All the FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST have, *through much tribulation, entered into the kingdom* Acts xiv. 22. of GOD ; and those that could not endure the trial, have *fallen and become reprobate*. There is no order of men, however holy, nor any place, however secret, where temptations and trials do not intrude.

3. No man is altogether secure from temptation, let his life be ever so long ; because, being *born in sin*, we have *that* within us which James i. 14. provokes temptation. When one temptation or tribulation is removed, another succeeds ; and we shall always have some degree of evil to suffer, till we have recovered the purity and perfection of that state from which we are fallen. Many by endeavouring to fly from temptations, have fallen precipitately into them ; for it is not by flight, but by patience and humility, that we must become superior to all our enemies.

4. He who only declines the outward occasion, and strives not to pluck up the inward principle by the root, makes little way in the true cause ; the temptation will recur the sooner, and he will feel the conflict still more severe. It is by gradual and patient, rather than impetu- Col. i. 11.ous, efforts, that, under God's assistance, we shall more easily conquer, than by impatient solicitude and rigorous austerity. In thine own temptations, often ask counsel ; and in the temptations of thy brother, treat him not with se-

Gal. vi. 1.

verity, but tenderly administer the comfort which you desire to receive.

5. The beginning of all evil temptations, is the instability of our own minds, and our little confidence in GOD ; and as a ship without a steersman is driven hither and thither by the waves, so *an unstable man*, is tossed and borne away upon the wave of every temptation. The fire proves the iron ; and temptation the just man. We frequently know not the strength that is in us, till temptation calls it forth, and shews us how much we are able to sustain. We must not, however, presume ; but be particularly upon our guard against the first assaults ; the enemy will be more easily subdued if he is resisted when he knocks at the threshold, and is not suffered to enter the portal of our hearts. Hence, a certain Poet gives this advice :

Seneca de
Provid.

*Take physic early ; med'cines come too late
When the disease is grown inveterate.*

Ovidii Rem.
Amoris : v.
91-2.

For evil is at first presented to the mind by a single suggestion ; the imagination then feeds upon it : this produces sensual delight, motions of inordinate desire, and at length the full consent of the will. And thus, the malignant enemy, that was not resisted in his first attack, enters, and takes entire possession of the heart : and the longer opposition is deferred by habitual negligence, the power of opposing becomes daily

less, and the strength of the adversary proportionably greater.

6. To some, temptations are more severe at the beginning of their conversion; to others, at the end. Some are severely afflicted with them during the whole course of life; and some experience but short and gentle trials. This variety is adjusted by the Wisdom and Equity of Divine Providence, which hath weighed the different states and dispositions of different men, and ordered all its dispensations so as most effectually to tend to the salvation of all.

7. Therefore, when we are tempted, let us not despair; but rather, with more fervour pray to GOD, that he would vouchsafe to support us under all our trials; and, in the language of St. Paul, *with every temptation, to make also a way to escape*, ^{1 Cor. x. 13.} that we may be able to bear it. *Let us humble our souls, in every temptation and trial, under the hand of GOD*, who hath promised to *save and exalt the lowly and the meek.* ^{1 Pet. v. 6.} Luke i. 52.

8. In temptations and trials, the proficiency of man, in a religious life, is more clearly proved; his merits and his virtues are then more distinctly developed. It is, indeed, a little matter for a man to be holy and devout, when he feels not the pressure of any evil: but if, in the time of adversity he possesses his soul *in patience*, he gives great hope of a regenerated nature. Some, however, who have resisted

temptations of the most rigorous kind, fall even by the lightest that can arise ; that, being humbled by the want of power to resist slight attacks, they may never presume upon their own strength to repel those that are severe.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of avoiding Rash Judgment.

Matth. vii.
1, 2.



KEEP thy eye turned inwardly upon thyself, and beware of judging the actions of others. In judging others, a man labours to no purpose, commonly errs, and easily sins ; but in examining and judging himself, he is always usefully employed. We generally judge of persons and things, as they either oppose or gratify our private views and inclinations ; and, blinded by self-love, we easily lose sight of a right judgment. If GOD alone were the pure object of all our desires, we should not be so easily troubled when the truth happened to be repugnant to our own opinions.

2. But we are frequently drawn aside from truth and peace, by some partial inclination lurking within, or some apparent good or evil rising without. Many, indeed, secretly seek their own selfishness in every thing they do, and perceive it not. These, while the course of things

runs smoothly with their own sentiments and wishes, seem to possess all the blessings of peace ; but when circumstances take an adverse turn, they are immediately disturbed, and become wretched. From the diversity of inclinations and opinions, arise frequent dissensions among friends and countrymen : among even the professors of a religious and holy life.

3. It is difficult to get rid of that which custom hath deeply rooted ; and no man is willing to be carried further than his own inclination and opinions lead him. If, however, thou adherest more to thy own reason and thy own will, than to the meek obedience of JESUS CHRIST, thou wilt but slowly and tardily receive the illuminations of the HOLY SPIRIT : for GOD expects an entire and absolute subjection of our will to His ; and that Divine Love should infinitely transcend all human reason.

CHAPTER XV.

Of Works of Charity.

ET not the hope of any worldly advantage, or the affection thou bearest to any human creature, prevail upon thee to do that which is evil. But for the benefit of him who stands in need of relief, a customary good work may sometimes be intermitted, or rather commuted ; for, in such case, that good work is not annihilated, but changed for a better. Without Charity, the external work profiteth nothing ; but whatever is done from Charity, however trifling and contemptible in the opinion of men, is wholly fruitful in the acceptance of GOD—who regardeth more the degree of love with which we act, than what or how much we have performed.

1 Cor. xiii.
1, &c.

2. He doth much, who loveth much ; he doth much, who doth well ; and he doth much and well, who constantly preferreth the good of the community to the gratification of his own will. Many actions, indeed, assume the appearance of Charity, that are wholly selfish and carnal ; because inordinate affection, self-will, the hope of reward, and the desire of personal advantage, are the motives that influence human conduct.

3. He that hath true and perfect Charity, *seeketh not his own* in any thing, but seeketh only that *GOD may be glorified in all things*. He *envieth* 1Cor. xiii. 14. *not*, or he loves no private gratification: he delighteth not in himself, nor in any created being; but wisheth for that which is infinitely transcendent, to be blest in the enjoyment of GOD. He ascribes not good to any creature, but refers it wholly to GOD; from whom, as from a fountain, all good originally flows; in whom, as in their centre, all the blessed shall finally rest.

5. O that man had but one spark of true Charity! He would then truly perceive that all earthly things and pursuits were altogether vanity.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of Bearing the Infirmities of Others.

HOSE things which a man cannot rectify, either in himself or others, he ought to bear patiently, till GOD be pleased to order it otherwise: for this state is, perhaps, continued, as the proper trial of patience, without which our merits are but of little weight. Yet, under these impediments, we must pray that GOD would be pleased to

affist us in order that we may bear them with constancy and meekness.

Matt. vi. 10. 2. If, after the first and second admonition, thy brother will not acquiesce, contend no longer with him; but leave the event to GOD, who only knoweth how to turn evil into good, that His Will may be done, and His Glory accomplished in all His creatures. Endeavour to be always patient of the faults and imperfections of others, whatever they may be; for thou hast many faults and imperfections of thy own, that require forbearance from others. If thou art not able to make thyself that which thou wishest to be, how canst thou expect to mould another in conformity to thy will? We willingly require perfection in the rest of mankind, and yet do not rectify the disorders of our own hearts.

3. We desire that the faults of others should be severely punished, and refuse the gentlest correction ourselves. We are offended at their licentiousness, and yet cannot bear the least denial of our own immoderate desires: we would subject all to the controul of rigorous statutes, but suffer no restraint upon our own actions: hence the rarity and difficulty of loving our neighbour as ourself. If all men were perfect, we should meet with nothing in the conduct of others to suffer for the sake of GOD.

4. But in the present fallen state of human nature, it is His Blessed Will that we should

learn to bear one another's burthens: and as no man is free from some burthen of sin or sorrow, as none has strength and wisdom sufficient for all the purposes of life and duty, the necessity of mutual forbearance, mutual consolation, mutual support, instruction, and advice, is founded upon our mutual imperfections, troubles, and wants. Besides, adversity better displays the fortitude and virtues that we possess: for these attacks do not contribute to make us frail, but rather shew us to be what we are.

Gal. vi. 2.

Col. iii. 13.

1 Thes. v. 2.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of a Religious Life.

 T is necessary that thou shouldst learn to break and subdue thy own will in many things, if thou wouldest wish to keep peace and harmony with others. It is no small thing to dwell in monasteries, or in a religious community, without reproach and without complaint — and to persevere faithfully in the same until death. Happy the man, who, in this state, hath passed his days in innocency, and closed them with success! That thou mayest stand, and increase in strength, in such a course, consider thyself as an exile from thy native coun-

1 Cor. iv. 10. try, *a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth*; and be willing to become a fool for the sake of CHRIST.

2. It is not the habit, or the tonsure, or any alteration merely external, but a change of heart, and an entire mortification of the passions, that are the indispensable qualifications for a religious life. He, who does not seek after God, and the salvation of his own soul, in purity and integrity of heart, will find only tribulation and anguish. The blessing of peace cannot long rest upon *him*, who doth not endeavour to make himself less than all men, and submissive in all things.

3. But, tell me, for what purpose camest thou hither? to serve or to govern? to be ministered unto or to minister? Thou knowest, that, here, thou art called to a life of patience and labour; not of idleness, and amusement. Here, men are tried, as gold in the fire. Here, no one can stand, unless with his whole heart he desireth to be humbled for the sake of GOD.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the Examples of the Holy Fathers.

ONSIDER the lively examples of the holy Fathers, in whom shone true religious perfection ; and you will soon discern how moderate and even amounting to nothing, is the sum of our actions. Alas ! what is our life, if it be compared with theirs ? Those Saints and Servants of Christ maintained their 2 Cor. xi. 27. allegiance to their LORD, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, in labour and fatigue, in watching and fastings, in prayer and holy meditation, in the multitude of persecutions and reproaches.

2. O, how numerous and severe were the trials of the Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, and all who desired to follow the footsteps of CHRIST ! They *hated their life in this world,* John xii. 26. *that they might keep it unto life eternal.*

3. How severe and abdicated a life was chosen by the Fathers in the desert ! What long and heavy temptations did their perseverance overcome ! What reiterated conflicts did they sustain with the enemy ! How frequent and ardent were their prayers ! how rigorous their tasks of abstinence ! With what zeal and fervour did

they aspire after spiritual perfection! With what intrepidity and resolution did they wage perpetual war against their vices! How pure and disinterested was their love of GOD! The day they devoted to labour, and the night to prayer; and even in the hours of labour, their heart was lifted up to heaven in continual aspirations. Their whole time was usefully employed: every hour, devoted to GOD, seemed short; and, rapt in the surpassing sweetnes of Divine contemplation, they became insensible of the want of bodily refreshment.

4. Riches, dignities, honours, friends, relations, renounced; they desired to have neither right nor interest in worldly matters: they scarcely partook of the necessaries of life; and were even grieved to administer to the wants of the body. With respect, therefore, to all earthly possessions, they were poor; but in holiness and the favour of GOD, they were rich. Outwardly, they were in absolute want; but inwardly, they abounded in Grace, and in the refreshments of Divine consolation.

5. To the world, they were aliens; but the adopted sons and the intimate friends of GOD. Yet, in their own estimation, they were nothing; and mean and despised in the eyes of men, they were elect and precious in the sight of GOD. By true humility, pure obedience, ardent charity, and persevering patience, they made continual

advances in the spiritual life, and obtained super-added degrees of the Grace of GOD. Such were the men that were given for examples to all the professors of a religious life: and these, comparatively few in number, should stimulate us to a good life; rather than other examples, more numerous but lukewarm, should urge us a contrary way.

6. O how great was the ardour of all religious societies at their first institution! What devotion in prayer! What emulation in holiness! How strict and impartial the discipline of the superior! —how unconstrained and cheerful the reverence and obedience of the subject! Such footsteps, though forsaken, still bear testimony to the upright progress of those holy men, who, by combating so bravely, have trampled the world under their feet. Now, *he* is accounted great who hath barely been no transgressor, and who hath supported his charge with patience.

7. Ah! lamentable state of supineness and negligence, that we should so soon lose the primitive ardour, and grow weary of life through mere idleness and indifference! GOD grant, that in thy heart, which has been impressed with so many examples of devotion, the desire of perfection may not wholly slumber and sleep.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Exercise of a True Christian.

THE life of a true Christian should be invigorated by every virtue; that he may be *inwardly* such as he outwardly *appeareth* to be. Yea, truly, he should be more virtuous than he *seemeth* to be: for GOD, whom we must entirely, and in all places, reverence, ^{1 Sam. xvi. 7.} feeth our hearts; and before whom we should ^{Job viii. 6.} therefore walk uprightly as angels. Every day we should renew our resolutions, and excite within ^{Rom. xii. 2.} us a fervour, as if on that day our conversion had begun. Then might we address our Maker in the following strain: “Help me, O Lord GOD, in this good resolution, and in my devotion to thy service: let this day be considered as the beginning of such devotion, for hitherto I have done nothing.”

2. According to the strength of our resolution, will be the degree of our progress; and much diligence is necessary for him who wisheth to advance well. If he, whose resolutions are strong, often fails, what will become of him whose resolutions are weak? We break our resolutions, indeed, from various causes, and in various ways; but even a slight omission of re-

ligious exercises seldom happens without some injury to the spirit. The good resolutions of the righteous depend not upon their own wisdom, but upon the Grace of GOD—in which they perpetually confide, whatever be their attempts: for man proposes but GOD disposes: nor is it in man to direct his steps.

3. If, for some act of piety, or some purpose of advantage to thy brother, a customary exercise is sometimes omitted, it may afterwards be easily resumed; but if it is lightly relinquished through carelessness or weariness of spirit, the omission becomes culpable, and will be found hurtful. What, though we strive with all our might, we shall still be deficient in many things. Some James iii. 2. determined resolution, however, must always be made, especially against those tempers and habits that are the chief impediments to our growth in Grace. The concerns both of our outward state, and inward spirit, are to be equally examined and regulated; because both affect our spiritual advancement.

4. If thou canst not *continually* recollect thyself, do it *sometimes* at least; and not less than twice every day; in the morning and in the evening. In the morning, resolve; and, in the evening, examine your conduct; what you have been that day in thought, word, and deed; for in all these, perhaps, thou hast often offended GOD and thy neighbour. Gird up now thy Job xxxviii. 3.

loins like a valiant man, and be continually watchful against the malicious stratagems of the devil. Bridle thy gluttonous appetites, and thou wilt more easily restrain all other carnal desires. Never be wholly idle; but be always either reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or employed in some useful labour for the common good. Bodily exercises are to be used with discretion; and must not be indiscriminately undertaken by all.

5. Those exercises which are not ordinary, must never be performed in the sight of others; for being private and personal, can be safely and usefully performed only in secret. Take care, however, that thou dost not become averse to the public exercises of the community; but having fully and faithfully discharged those to which thou art bound by the injunctions of the superior, if any leisure remains, return to thyself again, and do whatever the spirit of devotion prompts thee to. The same kind of exercise is not equally suited to the tastes and condition of all; but some are more useful to one than to another. Different exercises are also expedient for different times and seasons:—some are more salutary for the days of feasting, and some for those of fasting: we stand in need of some in the seasons of temptation, and of others in the hours of peace and rest: some subjects of meditation are fitter for a time of sorrow, and others when we *rejoice in the LORD.*

6. On the eve of the principal feasts, we should renew our holy exercises, and with more exalted fervour implore the mediation of our great INTERCESSOR: and in the intervals between feast and feast, we should form such holy resolutions, as if we were about to migrate from this world, and to be made partakers of the everlasting feast. In all these seasons of peculiar devotion, we ought so to prepare our spirits, and to regulate our actions, as if we were shortly to be admitted into *the joy of our LORD*. And if that blessed event be still deferred, let us humbly acknowledge that we are not yet sufficiently prepared for it, but are still unworthy of that great *glory which shall be revealed in us* in GOD'S appointed time. And may a contrite sense of such an improper state, quicken us to more faithful vigilance, and to a more holy preparation. *Blessed* Luke xii. 43, *is that servant, faith CHRIST, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth, I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.* Rom. viii. 18. 44.

CHAPTER XX.

Of the Love of Solitude and Silence.



SEEK and set apart convenient times for retirement and self-examination, and frequently meditate on the benefits received of Almighty GOD. Reject all studies that are merely curious; and read only what will rather produce compunction, than speculation. If thou canst refrain from unnecessary conversation and idle visits, and from *hearing and telling some new thing*, thou wilt find both sufficient and apt leisure for excellent meditation. The most eminent saints, where they were able, have shunned social intercourse, and chosen to live to GOD in retirement and solitude.

2. Some one has said, that “as often as he “mingled in the company of men, he came “out of it less humanised than he went in:” and to the truth of this, our own experience, after much conversation, bears testimony. It is much easier to be wholly silent, than not to exceed in talk: and it is much easier to keep concealed at home, than to preserve ourselves from sin abroad. He, therefore, that presseth forward to the perfection of the internal and spiritual life, must, with JESUS, withdraw from

the multitude. No man can safely go abroad, that does not love to stay at home ; no man can safely speak, that does not willingly hold his tongue ; no man can safely govern, that would not willingly be governed : no man can safely command, that has not well learned to obey ; and no man can safely rejoice, but he that hath ^{2 Cor. i. 12.} the testimony of a good conscience.

4. The safety of the saints hath always been full of the fear of GOD ; nor were they less humble, and less watchful over themselves, because they shone forth with great virtues and graces ; but the security of the wicked begins in pride and presumption, and ends in self-delusion. Whatever, therefore, are thy attainments in holiness, do not promise thyself a state of unchangeable perfection in the present life. Those whose character for virtue has stood high in the esteem of men, have been in consequence more exposed to the danger of a severer fall, through self-confidence : and, therefore, it is much safer for most men not to be wholly free from temptation, but rather to be often assailed thereby, lest they grow too secure ; lest, perhaps, they exalt themselves in the pride of human attainments ; nay, lest they become wholly devoted to the honours, the pleasures, and the comforts of this life. ^{2 Cor. xii. 7.}

5. O, that man would never seek after transitory joy, would never busy himself with the

trifling affairs of a perishing world! How pure a conscience might he maintain! O, that he could divorce his spirit from all vain solicitude! —and, devoting it to the contemplation of GOD and the truths of salvation, place all his confidence in the Divine mercy! What profound tranquillity and peace would hence possess his soul.

6. No man is worthy of heavenly consolation, unless he hath diligently exercised himself in holy compunction. If thou desirest true compunction, enter into thy closet; and excluding the tumults of the world, according to the advice of the Psalmist, *commune with thy heart, and be still.* Thou wilt find in the closet, that which thou often lovest abroad. Thy secret chamber, long continued in, becomes delightful; but, when seldom visited, it begetteth weariness and disgust. If, in the beginning of thy conversion, thou canst keep close within it, and cultivate the advantages it is capable of yielding, it will be ever after considered as a beloved friend, and become a most grateful consolation.

7. In solitude and silence the devout soul advances with speedy steps, and learns the hidden truths of the oracles of GOD. There, she finds the fountain of tears, in which she bathes and purifies herself every night: there, she riseth to a more intimate union with her Creator, in proportion as she leaves the darkness, impurity, and

Psalm iv. 4.

Eccl.
xxxix. 3.
Pf. vi. 67.

tumult of the world. To him, who withdraws himself from his friends and acquaintance to seek after GOD, will GOD draw near with his holy Angels. It is better for a man to “live in “a corner, so he have a regard for himself;” than, neglecting that *one thing needful*, to go abroad and even work miracles. It is highly commendable in all that are devoted to a religious life, to go seldom abroad, to shun being seen of men, and to be as little fond of seeing them.

8. Why shouldest thou desire to see that, which thou hast not permission to enjoy? for *the world passeth away, and the lust thereof*. Our ^{1 John xi. 17.} sensual appetites continually prompt us to range abroad; but when the hour of wandering is over, what do we bring home, but remorse of conscience, and weariness and dissipation of spirit? A joyful going out is often succeeded by a sad return; and a merry evening often brings forth a sorrowful morning. Thus, all carnal joy enters delightfully; but, ere it departs, bites and kills.

9. What canst thou see any where else, which thou canst not see in thy retirement? Behold the heavens, the earth, and all the elements!—for out of these were all things made. What canst thou see there or any where, that will *continue long under the sun?* Thou hopest, perhaps, to subdue desire by the power of enjoy-

Prov. xiv. 13.

Id. xxiii. 32.

Eccl. ii. 11.

Eccl. i. 14. ment: but thou wilt find it impossible for *the eye to be satisfied with seeing, or the ear to be filled with hearing.* If all visible nature could pass in review before thee, what would it be but a vain vision?

10. Lift up thy eyes, then, to GOD in the highest heavens, and pray for the forgiveness of thy sins and negligences. “Leave vain things “ to vain folks; and give thou thy mind to do “the will of GOD.” Make fast thy door Matth. vi. 6. hind thee; and invite JESUS, thy beloved, to come unto thee, and enlighten thy darkness with His Light. Abide faithfully with Him in this retirement, for thou canst find no such peace in any other place.

11. If thou hadst never gone abroad, and listened to idle reports, thou hadst better enjoyed this salutary peace. But, from the moment thou delightest to hear, and to tell news, thy heart becomes the prey of anxiety and perturbation.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of Compunction of Heart.

IF thou wouldest make any progress in the Christian Life, keep thyself in the Prov. xiii. ^{17.} fear of GOD, and avoid excess of liberty; but restrain all thy senses within strict discipline, and guard thy spirit against intemperate mirth. Give up thyself to heart-felt compunction, and thou wilt soon feel enkindled in it the fire of devotion. Compunction opens a path to Infinite Good, which is instantly lost by dissipation and light merriment. It is wonderful, indeed, that any man should thoroughly rejoice in this life, who considers his state of banishment, and the multitude of dangers to which his soul is subjected: but through levity of heart, and the neglect of self-examination, we grow insensible of the disorders of our souls; and often vainly laugh when with just reason we ought to mourn. There is however no true liberty, nor any solid joy, but in the fear of Eccl. i. 13. GOD, united with a pure conscience.

2. Blessed is the man, who can throw off every impediment of worldly distraction, and can concentrate his spirit within a holy compunction! Blessed is he, that can renounce every

enjoyment that may either defile or burthen his conscience. Strive manfully ; one custom is extirpated by another. If thou canst divorce thyself from men and their concerns, they will soon divorce themselves from thee, and leave thee to do the work of thy own salvation in peace.

Ecclus. xiv. 5. 3. Perplex not thy spirit, therefore, with the busines of others, nor involve thyself in the interests of the great. Keep thy eye continually upon thyself ; and admonish thyself, in an especial manner, above all that are dear to thee. Grieve not that thou dost not enjoy the favour of men ; but rather grieve, that thou hast not walked with that holy vigilance and self denial which become a true Christian, and a devoted servant of GOD.

Rom. viii. 8. 4. It is often more safe, and more beneficial, not to have many consolations in the present life ; especially such as are carnal. That we do not enjoy divine consolation, or but rarely enjoy it, is our own fault ; because we seek not compunction of heart, nor abandon those consolations that are external and vain. Acknowledge thyself to be unworthy of Divine consolation, but worthy rather of much tribulation.

5. When a man feels true compunction, the pleasures and honours of the world become burthensome and bitter to him. He then finds continual occasion for grief and tears : for whether he considers himself, or thinks of others, he

knows that no man lives without much tribulation. And the more strictly he considers himself, the greater will be his sorrow : for the ground of true compunction and just sorrow, is, the multitude of our transgressions and vices ; by which we become so involved, that we scarcely ever turn our minds to celestial contemplations.

6. If thou didst more frequently think of death, than of the length of life, thou wouldst undoubtedly make greater progress in amendment ; and if thou didst but thoroughly reflect on the pains of a future state of damnation, I believe that thou wouldst here willingly sustain labour and sorrow, nor fear the severest austeries. But because these considerations are not impressed upon our hearts, and we still yield to the blandishments of sense, we remain, both to the evil of our fallen state, and to the means of redemption from it, cold and insensible.

7. It is owing to the want of spiritual energy, that the wretched body complains upon such trifling occasions. Pray, therefore, humbly to GOD, that He would bless thee with the spirit of compunction ; and say, with the Royal Prophet, *Feed me, O LORD, with the bread of tears, and give me plenteousness of tears to drink !* Ps. lxxx. 5.

CHAPTER XXII.

Of the Consideration of Human Misery.

RETCHED thou art, wheresoever thou art, and to whatsoever thou turnest—unless thou turnest to GOD. Why art thou “vexed within thee,” because the events of life have not answered thy own will and desire? Who is there that enjoyeth all things according to his own will? Neither I, nor thou, nor any living soul. There is no human being without some share of distress and anguish, not even kings and emperors. Whose condition, therefore, is the best? His, surely, who is ready to suffer any affliction for the sake of GOD.

2. Many weak and ignorant persons say, “Behold, how happy a state does that man enjoy! How rich, how great, how powerful and exalted! But turn thy attention to celestial happiness, and thou wilt perceive that all these temporal advantages are of no value: their acquisition uncertain, and their enjoyment painful; for they are never possessed without solicitude and fear. The happiness of man, whose

Luke xii. 15. real wants are few, “consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

3. It is, indeed, misery to live upon earth ; *John xiv. 1.* and the more spiritual a man desires to be, the more bitter does he find the present life ; because he more sensibly feels, and more clearly discerns, the defects of human corruption. To eat and drink, to wake and sleep, to labour and take rest, and to be subject to all other necessities of fallen nature, must needs be a life of affliction and misery to the spiritual man, who longs “ to be dissolved,” and to be free from all mortal sin.

4. Under a sense of the oppression and trouble which the internal man feels from bodily wants, the Royal Prophet, so far as it was possible to be freed from them, devoutly prays, “ From my *Ps.* ‘necessities deliver me, O LORD !’ ” But woe to all who have not the sense of the misery of this present life ; and greater woe to those that are in love with this misery : for there are some whose attachment to it is so strong, that, though by their own labours and the bounty of others, they are scarcely supplied with common necessities ; yet, if it was possible for them to live here for ages, they would not spend a single thought on the Kingdom of GOD.

5. O, infatuated and faithless hearts, that are so deeply sunk in earth, as to feel no desire for any enjoyments but such as be carnal ! But, wretched creatures ! they will in the end bitterly experience how vain and worthless that is on

which they have “set their affections.” The saints of GOD, and all the devoted friends and followers of CHRIST, regarded not the things that gratified the flesh, nor those that were confined to this world, but their whole hope and desire panted after eternal felicity. Their whole soul was elevated to the eternal and invisible enjoyments of Heaven, lest, by the continual influence of what was visible and temporal, it might be enslaved to the enjoyments of earth. Dear brother! cast not away the hope of attaining to these spiritual enjoyments. Time and opportunity for this, are still allowed thee. Why, then, wilt thou defer thy good purpose from day to day? Arise, this moment, and say —“now is the time of action, now is the day of battle, now the season of amendment, the accepted time, the day of salvation.”

Rom. xiii. 11-13.

6. The hour of distress, is the hour of victory. Thou must pass through fire and water, before thou canst come to refreshment and rest. Unless thou dost violence to thyself, thou wilt never subdue sin. While we carry about us this corruptible body, we cannot be free from the assaults of sin, nor live without weariness and sorrow. We desire, indeed, to be at rest from all misery; but as, by sin, we lost our innocence, so, with our innocence, we lost all true happiness. It is, therefore, necessary, to hold fast our patience, and wait the appointed time of GOD’s

Mercy, 'till this iniquity, and the calamities of which it is the cause, "shall be overpast, and ^{2 Cor. v. 4.} mortality be swallowed up in life."

7. O, how great is human frailty, which is for ever prone to evil! To-day we confess our sins, and to-morrow commit the same sins again. This hour we resolve to be vigilant, and the next, act as if we had never resolved at all. What reason, therefore, have such frail and unstable creatures to be continually humble, and to reject every vain opinion of their own strength and goodness!

8. *That* may be soon lost through negligence, which, after much labour, we have scarcely attained through Grace: and what will become of us in the evening of life, if we grow cool and languid in the morning? Woe be to us, if we thus turn aside to repose and ease, as if all were peace and security; when as yet there does not appear a single footprint of true holiness in our conversation. We have still need, like good novices, of being again instructed, and, by severe discipline, of being formed a second time to holiness; if peradventure any hope be left of future amendment, and a more sure advancement in a spiritual life.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of the Meditation of Death.

Job xiv. 1.

Macc. ii. 63.

Pf. cxlv. 4.



IFE soon passeth away: look well therefore to such an event. Man is here to-day, and gone to-morrow: and when once removed from sight, soon perishes from remembrance. Oh! the stupidity and hardness of the human heart, that thinks only on the present, and does not sufficiently regard the future! In every thought, and every action, thou shouldst hold thyself in readiness as if thou wert to die to-day; and were thy conscience pure, thou wouldst not much fear instant dissolution. It is better to avoid sin, than to shun death. If thou art not prepared for thy departure to-day, how wilt thou be prepared for it to-morrow? To-morrow is an uncertain day; and how knowest thou that to-morrow will be thine?

2. What availeth it to live long, when our improvement is so inconsiderable? Alas! length of days does not always work amendment, but frequently increases our misdoings. I wish indeed that we could live well, were it only for one day. Many reckon years from the time of their conversion; but the *fruits* of that conver-

tion are frequently small. Therefore, though death be terrible, a longer life may be yet more dangerous. Blessed is the man, who hath always the hour of death before his eyes, and who daily keeps himself in preparation for its approach. If thou hast ever seen another die, remember, that thou must pass from existence in the like manner.

3. When it is morning, think that thou mayest not live 'till the evening; and in the evening, presume not to promise thyself another morning. "Be ye, therefore, alway ready;" and so live, that death may not find thee unprepared for its summons. Many die suddenly and unexpectedly; "for in such an hour as ye think 'not, the son of man cometh.' And when that last hour is come to thee, thou wilt begin to think differently of thy past life, and wilt greatly grieve for thy negligence and remissness.

4. How wise and happy the man, who endeavours to be as holy in life, as he wishes to be found in death! Wherefore, a perfect contempt of the world, an ardent desire of improvement in holiness, the love of discipline, the labour of penitence, prompt obedience, self-denial, and the patient enduring of any affliction for the love of CHRIST, will give great confidence of a happy departure. In the enjoyment of health, thou wilt be able to do much; but when oppressed by sickness, I know not what thou

Matth. xxiv.

44.
Luke xii. 40.

Eccles. ix. 10.

John ix. 4.

canst do. Few are improved by infirmities, as few great pilgrims rarely become saints.

5. Let not the examples of thy friends and neighbours, nor any confidence in their wisdom, cause thee to defer the care of thy salvation to a future time; for all men, even thy friends and relations, will forget thee much sooner than thou supposest. It is better to “provide oil for thy “lamp” now, before it is wanted, than to depend upon receiving it from others “when the “bridegroom cometh:” for if thou art not careful of thyself now, who can be careful of thee hereafter when time and opportunity are for ever lost? This instant—NOW—is the precious moment. For shame, therefore! not to improve this invaluable moment, in which we may lay hold on eternity. A time will come, when thou shalt wish for one day, one hour, for repentance: and who shall say whether thou wilt be able to obtain it?

6. Awake then, dearly beloved, and behold from what danger thou mayest deliver thyself—from what great fear thou mayest be rescued—only by *passing the time of thy sojourning in holy fear*, and in expectation of removal by death. Endeavour now so to live, that, in the hour of death, thou mayest rejoice rather than fear. Learn now to die to the world, that thou mayest then begin to live with CHRIST: learn now to despise all things, that thou mayest freely rise

Matth. xxv.
&c.

Rom. vi. 8.

to CHRIST. Subdue *now* thy body by penitence and self-denial, that *then* thou mayest enjoy sure and certain “ trust through CHRIST to ^{1 Cor. ix. 27.} _{2 Cor. iii. 4.} “ God-ward.”

7. Ah, foolish man! why dost thou think thou wilt live long, when thou canst not count upon a single day? How many unhappy souls, deluded by this hope, are, in some unexpected moment, separated from the body! How often dost thou hear, that “ one is slain, another is drowned, another, by falling from a precipice, has broken his neck—another is choaked in eating; another has dropt down dead in the exercise of some favourite diversion; and that thou-
 fands, indeed, are daily perishing by fire, by sword, by the plague, or by the violence of robbers! Thus, death is the end of all; and the life of man passeth away suddenly like a shadow.

^{2 Chron.}
^{xxix. 15.}
^{Job xvii. 7.}
^{Pf. cii. 11.}
^{cxliv. 4.}

8. Who will remember thee after death? Who will then pray for thee? Come, come then, dearest brother, do now whatsoever thou canst; for thou knowest not the hour of death, nor what shall happen to thee after death. While, therefore, there IS TIME, gather the riches of immortality. Think of nothing but of thy redemption; be careful for nothing but for such things as are of GOD. “ Make to thyself friends” of the regenerate and glorified sons of GOD, that when thy present life “ shall

Luke xvi. 9. “ fail, they may receive thee into everlasting
“ habitations.”

1 Pet. ii. 11. 9. Live in the world as a stranger and pil-
grim, that hath no concern with its business or
Heb. xiii. 14. pleasures ; and knowing that thou hast *here no*
continuing city, keep thy heart disengaged from
earthly passions, and lifted upward to GOD.
Thither let thy daily prayers, and sighs, and
tears, be directed ; that, after death, thy spirit
may be happily wafted to heaven.

CHAPTER XXIV.

*Of the last Judgment, and of the Punishment of
Sinners.*

Ecclus. vii.
36.



N all thy undertakings, “ remember
“ the end ;” and consider how thou
wilt appear before that Judge, from
whom nothing is hidden ; who is not appeased
by gifts, nor softened by excuses, but “ judgeth
“ righteous judgment.” Oh ! most wretched
and foolish sinner !—thou, who tremblest before
the face of an angry man, what wilt thou have
to answer unto GOD ?—who knoweth all thy
sins, and searcheth the lowest depths of the evil
that is in thee ? Why lookest thou not forward
for the day of Judgment ?—in which none can
possibly be excused or defended by another ; but

every one will have burden enough in answering for himself. Now, thy labours may be profitable ; thy tears, acceptable ; thy sighs and groanings, heard ; thy contrition salutary, and of power to wash away thy sins.

2. The patient man hath in this world a great and salutary act of purgatory to perform ; who, when he is injured, is more grieved for the sin of the offender, than for the wrong that is done to himself ; who can freely pray for his enemies, and from his heart forgive their offences ; who feels no reluctance to ask for forgiveness of others ; who is sooner moved to compassion, than provoked to anger ; who frequently committeth violence on himself, and endeavours to bring the body into absolute subjection to the spirit. And it is, surely, better, to purge away sin, and to break off evil habits, by continual resistance, than to leave them to the purifications of another state. But our progress in such a salutary labour, is too frequently retarded, from an inordinate love of the indulgences of corrupt flesh and blood.

3. As thy soul is imperishable, what can the fire of hell consume but thy sins?" The more, therefore, thou now indulgest thyself, and gratifiest the desires of the flesh, the more severe must be thy punishment, and the more fuel dost thou heap up as food for that fire. According to the heinousness of the sin, will be the weight

of the punishment. There, the sluggard shall be incessantly goaded with burning stings, and the glutton tortured with inconceivable hunger and thirst: there, the luxurious and voluptuous shall be overwhelmed with waves of flaming pitch and stinking sulphur; and the envious, with the pain of disappointed malignity, shall howl like dogs.

If. xxxiv. 9.

4. Every vice shall there receive its appropriate torture. The proud shall be filled with shame and confusion, and the covetous straitened in inexpressible want. One hour of torment there, will be more insupportable than a hundred years of the bitterest penance in this life. There, no respite of pain, no consolation to the damned; while here, there is some intermission of labour, and some comfort from the society of friends. Be, therefore, solicitous, and afflicted for thy sins, that in the day of judgment thou mayest be numbered among the blessed. For

Wisd. v. 1.

“ then shall the righteous man stand in great
“ boldness before the face of such as have af-
“ flicted him, and made no account of his la-
“ bours.” Then, shall *he* rise up in judgment, who *now* meekly submits to the judgment of others: then, the humble and poor in spirit shall have great confidence, and the proud shall be encompassed with fear on every side: then, it will be evident to all, that *he* was wise in this world, who had learned to be despised as a fool

Wisd. v. 4.
1 Cor. iv. 10.
Ps. cxxvi. 5.
cvii. 42.

for the love of CHRIST : then, the remembrance of tribulation, patiently endured, shall become sweet, and “ all iniquity shall stop her mouth.”

5. Then, every devout man shall rejoice, and every impious man shall mourn : then, shall the mortified and subdued flesh triumph over that which was pampered in ease and indulgence ; the coarse garment shall then shine, and the soft raiment lose all its lustre : the homely cottage shall be then more extolled than the gilded palace. Then constant patience shall give that stability, which the power of the world could not confer : then, simple obedience shall be more highly prized than worldly subtilty, and a pure conscience than learned philosophy : then, the contempt of riches shall be of more value than all the treasures of worldly men : then, shalt thou have greater comfort from having prayed devoutly, than from having fared deliciously ; and shalt more rejoice that thou hast kept silence long, than that thou hast talked much. Then, works of holiness shall avail thee more than innumerable fine words : then, a life of self-denial and severe penance shall give thee more satisfaction than all earthly delights could bestow.

6. Learn, therefore, now to suffer under afflictions comparatively light, that thou mayest be delivered from afflictions more grievous.

Here, thou mayest make trial of what thou wilt there be able to sustain : for if thou art able to bear but little now, how wilt thou then bear eternal torments ? If only a slight suffering make thee so impatient now, what will the tortures of hell do hereafter ? Behold and consider ! —thou canst not have a double Paradise :—thou canst not enjoy a life of delight and pleasure upon earth, and afterwards reign with CHRIST in Heaven.

7. If thou hadst hitherto lived in honour and pleasure, what would it all avail, if thou wert to die the next moment ? All, therefore, is vanity —but the love of GOD, and a life devoted to his will. He that loveth God with all his heart, fears neither death, nor punishment, nor judgment, nor hell; because “perfect love casteth out fear,” and openeth a sure and immediate access to the Divine Presence. But it is no wonder, that he, who still loves and delights in sin, should fear both death and judgment. It is however good, that, if thou art not withheld from sin by the love of GOD, thou shouldest be by the fear of hell : for he that casts behind him the fear of GOD, cannot possibly persevere in any thing that is good, but must run precipitately into the snares of the devil.

Eccl. i. 2.

Deut. x. 20.

Rom. viii. 38.

1 John iv. 18.

Matt. x. 28.

1 Tim. vi. 9.

CHAPTER XXV.

Of Zeal in the Reformation of Life.

BE watchful, and diligent in the service ^{2 Tim. iv. 5.} of GOD; and frequently consider why ^{Rev. iii. 2.} thou wert created, and why thou hast left the broad way of the world. Was it not that thou mightest live unto GOD, and become a spiritual man? With increasing ardour, therefore, “press” continually “towards the mark,” and ere long thou wilt receive “the prize of ^{Phil. iii. 14.} the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS;” when there shall be “no more fear nor sorrow, ^{Rev. xxi. 4.} for GOD will wipe all tears from our eyes,” and take away all trouble from our hearts. Thou art now labouring for a short time only; but thy labour shall be exchanged for an everlasting life, not only of perfect rest, but of perpetual joy. Continue only faithful, and diligent, in labouring, and GOD doubtless will be faithful and rich in reward. Maintain an equable and ^{Rom. viii. 24.} firm hope, that thou mayest attain the palm of glory; and beware of security, lest it betray thee into sloth or presumption.

2. A certain anxious person, whose soul was continually fluctuating between hope and fear, came one day into a church, overwhelmed with

anguish ; and prostrating himself in prayer before the altar, repeatedly uttered this wish in his heart : “ O that I knew I should be able to “ persevere ! ” Immediately he heard the Divine voice speaking within him thus : “ And “ what wouldst thou do, if this knowledge were “ bestowed upon thee ? Do *now*, that which “ thou wouldst *then* do ; and rest secure of thy “ perseverance.” Comforted and established by this answer, he resigned himself to the Divine disposal, and his perplexity and distress were soon removed. Instead of indulging curious inquiries into the probable future state of his soul, he applied himself wholly to know what was

Rom. xii. 2. “ that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of “ GOD,” as the only principle and perfection
Pſ. xxxvii. 2. of every good work. “ Trust in the LORd, and “ do good,” saith the Royal prophet ; “ so shalt “ thou dwell in the land, and be fed with the “ riches of His Grace.”

3. There is one obstacle which stands in the way of many, in the reformation and improvement of life—which is, the dread of the difficulty, or the labour of the contest. But *they* only make the greatest advances in holiness, who resolutely endeavour to conquer in those things which are most disagreeable and most opposite to their appetites and desires ; and then chiefly does a man most advance, and obtain an ampler portion of the Grace of GOD, when he most

overcomes himself, and most mortifies his own spirit.

4. But all men have not the same degree of evil, or the same death, to overcome. A diligent Christian, however, who has more and stronger passions to subdue, will be able to make a greater progress than he who is inwardly calm, and outwardly regular, but less fervent in the pursuit of holiness.

5. Two things greatly contribute to perfect amendment; namely, the withdrawing from those sinful gratifications to which nature is most inclined, and the labouring after that virtue in which we are most deficient. Be careful also to avoid those things which more frequently displease thee in *others*. Wherever thou art, turn every thing to good account: if thou beholdest, or hearest of good examples, let them kindle in thee a desire of imitation; if thou observest any thing blameable, beware of doing it thyself; or, if thou hast occasionally done it, endeavour to amend it the sooner. As thy eye observeth others, so art thou observed by others in turn, and censured by them.

6. How good and pleasant it is to behold brethren in the same religious society, full of fervour and devotion in spirit!—courteous, and submissive in their outward deportment! How proportionably grievous and offensive, to find them leading dissolute lives!—so repugnant to

the obligations of that state which they have freely chosen. How hurtful is it, to forget the nature and design of their calling, and to turn all the thoughts and desires of the heart to that which is only foreign to it.

7. Be mindful, therefore, of the vocation to which thou hast been called, and keep impressed upon thy mind the image of the Crucified JESUS. Thou wilt find abundant reason to be ashamed, when, after considering the Life of CHRIST, thou reviewest thy own; which, though thou hast long professed the imitation of that Blessed Exemplar, thou hast yet taken so little care to make conformable to it. He that intently and devoutly exercises himself in the most holy life and passion of his LORD, will find all that is useful and necessary to his redemption in such great abundance, that he need not seek after any thing out of, or better than, JESUS. O, if JESUS CRUCIFIED would come into our hearts, how soon and how sufficiently should we be taught!

1 Cor. ii. 2.

8. The zealous Christian bears patiently, and performs cheerfully, whatsoever is commanded him: but he that is lukewarm and negligent, suffers tribulation upon tribulation, and of all men is most miserable; for he is destitute of inward comfort, and to that, which is outward, he is forbidden to have recourse. He that obstinately throws off the restraints of "CHRIST's easy yoke," will be always in straits and diffi-

culties; for one thing or the other will constantly displease him.

9. Consider the examples of those, who have voluntarily submitted to the severest discipline; who go abroad seldom, eat sparingly, clothe coarsely, labour much, talk little, watch late, rise early, pray long, read often, and always keep their spirits under the restraint of some holy exercise. Consider also the spiritual and divine lives of the Apostles, and first followers of CHRIST, as the object of thy imitation; and doubt not but the mercy of GOD, to all that turn the desire of their heart to Him, will enable thee to follow it. Shame attend thee if thou art idle in such an holy exercise!—when so many eminent religious persons have applied themselves to the praise of their Maker.

10. Would to GOD, that we had no other employment, but with heart and voice to glorify His Holy Name. O, that we never stood in need of meat, of drink, or of sleep, but could always praise GOD, and attend to spiritual studies. We should then be happier than we now are, subjected, as at present, to the necessities of the flesh. O that these necessities were wholly removed!—and that we had nothing to hunger after, but those spiritual refreshments which we now so seldom taste!

11. When a man is so far advanced in the Christian Life, as not to seek consolation from any created thing, then doth he first begin per-

Phil. iv. 11. fectly to enjoy GOD ; then, “ in whatever state “ he is, he will therewith be content ; ” then, neither doth prosperity exalt, nor adversity depress him ; but his heart is wholly fixed and established in GOD, who is to Him All in All ; with respect to whom, nothing perisheth, nothing dieth ; but all things live to his glory, and are continually subservient to His Blessed Will.

Ecclus. vii. 36. 12. Be always mindful of the end ; and remember, that time once lost will never return. Without watchfulness and diligence, holiness can never be attained ; for the moment thou beginnest to relax, thou wilt feel inward disquietude. But if thou press forward with fervour, thou shalt find peace ; and through the Mercy of GOD, and love of holiness, wilt per-

Luke xiv. 19. ceive “ thy yoke ” become daily “ more easy, “ and thy burthen more light.” The fervent and diligent soul is prepared for all duty and for all events. It is greater toil to resist evil habits and violent passions, than to sweat at the hardest bodily labour. He who is not careful to resist small sins, will insensibly fall into greater. Thou shalt always have joy in the evening, if thou hast spent the day well. Watch over thyself, therefore ; and whatever you may do, do not neglect thyself. Thou wilt make greater advances in IMITATING the Life of CHRIST, in proportion to the greater firmness with which thou deniest thyself.



BOOK THE SECOND.

*Instructions for the more intimate Enjoy-
ment of the Spiritual Life.*

CHAPTER I.

Of Internal Conversation.

THE kingdom of GOD is within you, Luke xvii. 21. faith our blessed REDEEMER. Abandon, therefore, this wretched world, and turn to the LORD with all thy heart, and thy soul shall find rest. Learn to despise outward things, and keep thy attention fixed upon what passeth within thee, and thou wilt soon perceive the “ coming of the Kingdom of GOD ;” for, Rom. xiv. 17. “ the Kingdom of GOD ” is that “ peace and “ joy in the HOLY GHOST,” which is not sensual and worldly. CHRIST will come to thee, shewing thee his consolation, if thou preparest within thee an abode fit to receive Him. All his glory and beauty come from within, and there He delights to dwell. His visits there are frequent, his conversation sweet, his comforts

refreshing, and his peace passing all understanding.

Sol. S. v. 4.

2. O faithful soul, dispose thy heart for the reception of this Bridegroom, that he may come in unto thee, and dwell with thee: for thus he saith: “ If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Give, therefore, free admission to CHRIST, and deny entrance to all others. When thou possessest CHRIST, thou art rich, and canst want no other treasure. He will protect thee, and provide for thee so faithfully, that thou wilt not any more have need to hope in man. Men are changeable and perishable: but CHRIST abideth eternally, and continueth firmly unto the end.

Matt. xxviii.
20.

3. Thou must not place any confidence in frail and mortal men, however endeared by reciprocal affection or offices of kindness: nor art thou to be grieved, when, from some change in their temper, they become unfriendly and injurious; for men are inconstant as the wind, and he that is for thee to-day, may be against thee to-morrow. But place thy whole confidence in GOD, and let him be all thy fear, and all thy love. He will answer for thee against the great accuser, and do that which is most conducive to thy deliverance from evil.

Heb. xiii. 14.

4. Here, thou hast “ no continuing city;”

and whatever be thy situation, thou art “ a stranger and a pilgrim,” and canst never obtain rest till thou art united to CHRIST. Why then dost thou stand gazing about the earth, when the earth is not the place of thy rest? Thy dwelling place should be in Heaven; and earthly objects are only to be viewed but as in thy passage thither. They are all hurried away, and thyself with them; beware, therefore, lest thou be bound captive in their chains, and perish in their ruin. Let thy thoughts dwell with the Most HIGH, and thy desire and prayer ascend without intermission to CHRIST.

5. If thou art not able to meditate on deep and heavenly mysteries, rest on the Passion of CHRIST, and let thy soul dwell securely in the efficacy of his sufferings: for if thou canst devoutly fly for refuge to his wounds, thou wilt find abundant comfort in tribulation; and so far from being disturbed by the contempt of men, thou wilt bear with ease and serenity the distractions of calumny.

6. CHRIST was rejected of men; and, in the *Isaiah* liii. 3. extremity of distress, forsaken by his disciples and friends. CHRIST chose to suffer thus, and *Ps. xxii. 6.* to be thus deserted and despised; and dost thou complain of injury and contempt from others? CHRIST had enemies and flanderers; and wilt ¹ *Pet. ii. 23,* thou have all men to be thy friends and admirers? How can thy patience be crowned in ^{24.}

Heaven, if thou wilt have no adverfity to struggle with on earth? Canſt thou be the friend and

John xv. 13,

14.

2 Tim. ii. 11,

12.

FOLLOWER OF CHRIST, and not the partaker of his ſufferings? Thou muſt, therefore, ſuffer with CHRIST, and for His ſake, if thou indeed deſireſt to reign with Him.

7. If thou hadſt but once “ known the fel-“ lowſhip of the ſufferings of JESUS,” and been ſenſible, though in a ſmall degree, of the divine ardour of his Love, thou wouleſt be wholly in- different about thy own perſonal ſhare in the good and evil of the preſent life; and wouleſt rather rejoice to meet with reproach and ſcorn; for the love of JESUS maketh the ſoul in which it dwells utterly deſpife itſelf. He that loveth JESUS unfeignedly, and is delivered from the ſlavery of inordinate deſire, can always freely turn to GOD; and, raifing himſelf in ſpirit above himſelf, can quietly converse with and enjoy him.

Phil. iii. 20.

8. That man is truly wiſe, and rather taught of GOD than of men, who perceiveth and judg- eth of things as they really are, and not as they are diſtinguished by names and by general eſti- mation. He that has known the power of the ſpiritual life, and made ſmall account of outward things, requireth neither time nor place for the exercise of devotion. He can ſoon collect together all his faculties, because he is never wholly engaged by ſenſible objects: his tranquillity is

not interrupted by bodily labour or inevitable business; but as events arise, he accommodates himself to them accordingly: nor is he moved by the capricious humours, and perverse behaviour of men. The more a man suffers himself to be hindered and distracted by things, the more he is moved by them.

9. If the frame of thy spirit were in right Rom. viii. 28. order, and thou wert inwardly pure, all things would conduce to thy improvement, and thy good: and because thou art now displeased, and often disturbed by many things, it is evident that thou art not yet thoroughly dead to thyself, nor severed from all earthly things.

10. Nothing entangles and defiles the heart of man so much, as the inordinate and impure 1 John ii. 15. love of the creature: but if thou canst abandon the gratification of earthly and sensual life, thou wilt soon be able to meditate upon celestial things, and frequently to let thy heart rejoice Tit. ii. 2. within thee.

CHAPTER II.

Of Humble Submission.

Rom. viii. 31.



EGARD not much who is for thee, nor who is against thee; but, be careful about this, that GOD be with thee in

2 Chron. xxv. 8.

every purpose and action of thy life. Keep thy conscience pure, and GOD will be thy continual defence; and him whom GOD defends, the malice of man hath not power to hurt. If thou

If. xli. 13.

haest learned to be silent and to be patient, thou shalt certainly see the salvation of the LORD.

Acts i. 7.

GOD knoweth the proper season and manner of thy deliverance, and thus thou oughtest to resign thyself to him. It is GOD that gives help under every trouble, and deliverance from all confusion.

Ps. cxxi. 2.

2. It is often useful for the better preserving of our humility, that other men should know and reprove our transgressions: and in cases of injury among brethren, the more humble the acknowledgment of the offender is, the more effectually will the offended person be reconciled.

Ps. cxiii. 6, 7.

3. GOD protects and delivers the humble man; the humble, HE loves and comforts; to the humble HE condescends; on the humble he

2 Cor. vii. 6.

bestows more abundant measures of his Grace, and, after his humiliation, exalts him to glory. GOD reveals the mysteries of redemption to the Matt. xi. 25. humble, and sweetly invites and draws him to Himself. The humble man, though surrounded with confusion, is still in peace; for the stability of his peace resteth upon GOD, and not on the world. Prov. xxix. 23.

4. Do not think that thou hast made any progress towards perfection, till thou feelest that thou art “less than the least of all” human beings.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Good and Peaceable Man.

 **H**OU must first secure the peace of thy own breast ere thou be qualified to restore peace to others. A peaceful man Matt. v. 9. profiteth more than a thoroughly learned man. The wrathful and turbulent man, who is always ready to believe wrong, turneth even good into evil; the peaceful man turneth all things into good. He that is established in peace, is exempt from suspicion; but he that is discontented Prov. xv. 18. and proud, is tormented with suspicions of every description: he has no rest in himself, and he will not allow rest to others. He speaketh what he ought to suppress, and suppresseth what he

ought to speak ; he is watchful in observing the duty of others, and negligent in respect to his own. But let thy zeal be first exercised towards thyself, before it be exercised in the attempt to reform thy neighbour.

2. Thou art very skilful in colouring and excusing thy own actions, and yet art unwilling to receive an excuse for the actions of others. It would, however, be more just to excuse thy brother, and accuse thyself. If thou desirest to be borne with, thou must bear also with others. Consider how distant those are from that Charity, which “ beareth, believeth, and hopeth all “ things ;” and from that Humility, which knoweth no indignation or resentment against any being but itself.

3. It is no very great boast to live in peace with the gentle and good, for this is natural to all that are inclined to peace ; for we love those most, whose sentiments and dispositions correspond with our own : but to maintain peace with the churlish and perverse, the irregular, and contradictory, is an heroic and glorious attainment ; attainable only from an extraordinary measure of Grace.

Rom. xii. 18.

4. Some there are, however, who preserve the peace of their own breasts, and live in peace with all about them : and there are some, who, having no peace in themselves, are employed in disturbing the peace of others ; they are the

Prov. xviii.

17.

1 Cor. xiii.

4-8.

tormentors of others, their brethren, and still more the tormentors of themselves. There are also some, who not only retain their own peace, but make it their business to restore peace to others. After all, however, the most perfect peace to which we can attain in this miserable life, consists rather in meek and patient suffering, than in an exemption from adversity ; and he that has most learnt to suffer, will certainly possess the greatest share of peace. He is the conqueror of himself, the lord of the world, the friend of CHRIST, and the heir of Heaven !

CHAPTER IV.

Of Simplicity and Purity.



IMPLICITY and purity are the two wings which lift a man above this earth. Simplicity ought to be in the intention ; purity, in the affection : simplicity Matt. v. 8. turns to GOD, purity unites with and enjoys him.

2. No good action would hinder thee, if thou wert free from inordinate affection : and this internal freedom thou wouldest enjoy, if nothing else but the approval of the Deity, and the well doing of thy neighbour, were the objects of thy solicitude.

3. If thy heart were rightly dispos'd, every creature would be as a mirror of life, and as a book of Divine knowledge; for there is no creature, however small and abject, that does not represent the goodness of GOD.

4. Such as is the frame of the spirit, such is its perception and judgment of outward things. If thou hadst simplicity and purity, thou wouldest be able to comprehend all things without error, and to behold them without danger. The pure heart penetrates both heaven and hell.

5. If there be joy in this world, who possesseth it more than the pure in heart? And if there be tribulation and anguish, who suffereth them more than he that hath an evil conscience?

6. As iron cast into the fire is purified from its rust, and becomes bright as the fire itself, so the man who turns wholly to GOD is freed from his languor, and becometh a new creature.

7. When a man begins to grow lukewarm, then he shrinks from even trifling labour; and willingly receives comfort from sensual enjoyments: but when he begins to conquer himself in good earnest, and to walk boldly in the way of the Lord, then, those things which at first appeared to be of great importance, he reputeth but as dross and dirt.

CHAPTER V.

Of Personal Attention.

E ought to place but little confidence in ourselves, because we are often destitute both of grace and understanding. The light we have is small, and that is soon lost by negligence. We are even insensible of this inward darkness: we do wrong and aggravate our guilt by excusing it; we are impelled by passion, and mistake it for zeal; we severely reprove little failings in our brethren, and pass over enormous sins in ourselves; we quickly feel, and perpetually brood over, the sufferings brought upon us by others, but have no thought of what others suffer from us. If a man would but truly and impartially examine himself, he would find but little cause to judge severely of his neighbour.

2. The spiritual man prefers, to all other cares, the care of his own improvement; and he that watches strictly over his own conduct, will be easily silent about the conduct of others. But thou wilt never attain to the spiritual and devout man, unless thou canst withdraw thy attention from foreign matters, and fix it wholly upon thyself. Let a man but wholly apply to

John xii. 35.

Matt. vii. 3.

himself and his Maker, and he will not be easily moved by what he hears or sees in the world.

Matt. xvi. 26. 3. Where art thou when thou art absent from thyself? and after thou hast run about, what advantageth it to have neglected and forsaken thyself? He that desires peace and true union, must cast all persons and things behind him, and keep GOD and his own spirit only in his view.

4. Thou wilt make advances towards perfection, in proportion as thou abandonest worldly cares; and thou wilt retrograde in proportion to temporal anxieties. Count nothing great, lofty, grateful, acceptable to thyself, but GOD entirely; or that which emanates from Him. Count all consolation from “the Creature,” as altogether vanity. A soul, loving GOD, spurns every thing under his affection. GOD alone, eternal and immense, filling all things, is the solace of the soul and the true joy of the heart.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Joy of a Good Conscience.

THE “rejoicing” of a good man is “the ^{2 Cor. i. 12.} testimony of his conscience.” Have only a good conscience, and thou shalt always have gladness of heart. A pure conscience will support a man under the severest trials, and enable him to rejoice in the depths of adversity: but an evil conscience causeth disquietude and ^{1 John iii. 21.} fear. Thou wilt always enjoy tranquillity, if thy heart condemn thee not. Be unwilling to rejoice, unless thou hast done well. The wicked cannot have true joy, nor taste of inward peace: for, “there is no peace to the wicked,” saith ^{Isaiah xlvi. 22.} the LORD. If they should say, “We are in peace; no evil shall come upon us; and who will dare to hurt us?” believe them not: for the anger of the LORD will suddenly rise up, and their boasting shall vanish like smoke, and ^{Rom. i. 28.} the thoughts of their heart shall perish. ^{Rom. ii. 8, 9.}

2. To “glory in tribulation,” is not difficult ^{Rom. v. 3.} to him that loveth; for thus to glory, is “to glory in the cross of our Lord JESUS CHRIST.” ^{Gal. vi. 14.} That glory is short and painful, which is given and received among men: for sadness always follows hard upon the glory of the world. The

glory of the good is proclaimed by the voice of conscience, and not by the mouth of men : their joy is from GOD, and in GOD ; and their rejoicing is founded in Truth. He that aspires after true and eternal glory, values not that which is temporal ; and he that seeketh after the temporal glory, or that doth not despise it from his heart, proves that he loves less the eternal glory of Heaven. He only can have great tranquillity, whose happiness depends not on the praise or dispraise of men.

3. If thy conscience were pure, thou wouldest easily be contented and pacified ; for the commendation of man can add nothing to thy holiness, nor their censures make thee more vile. What thou art, thou art ; nor can the praise of the whole world make thee greater in the sight of GOD. The more thy attention is fixed upon the state of thy spirit, the less wilt thou regard what is said of thee in the world. Man looks only on the face ; *GOD searcheth the heart.* Man considereth only the outward act ; God the inward principle from which it springs.

Rom. xii. 10. 4. Always to act well, and to think moderately of thy actions, is a mark of true humility ; as it is of great inward purity and faith, to abandon the hope of consolation from created things. He that seeketh not a witness for himself among men, shews that he hath committed his whole state to GOD : for it is “ not he who com-

“ mendeth himself,” that “ is approved ; ” but he only, saith the blessed PAUL, “ whom GOD 2 Cor. x. 18. commendeth.” To walk in the presence of GOD, as manifested within, and not to be enslaved by any worldly affection, is the state of the spiritual man.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Love of Jesus above All.

BLESSED is the man who knoweth what it is to love JESUS, and for his sake to despise himself. To preserve this love, he must relinquish the love of himself and of all creatures ; for JESUS will be loved alone. The love of the creatures is deceitful and unstable ; that of JESUS is faithful and permanent. He that adhereth to the creature, must fail when the creature faileth ; but he that adhereth to JESUS, will be established with him for ever. Love Him and retain him as your friend ; for, though the heavens and the earth should be dissolved, He will not forsake thee, nor suffer thee to perish. Thou must one day be separated from all created things, whether thou wilt, or not : living and dying, therefore, adhere to JESUS ; and securely commit thyself

to his faithful protection, who, when all earthly sources fail, is alone able to sustain thee.

2. Such is the nature of thy Beloved, that He will admit of no rival for thy love; but will Himself have the sole possession of thy heart, and, like a king, sit there as upon his proper throne.

3. If thou wouldest divest thyself of the love of all creatures, JESUS would dwell with thee continually. Whatever love thou hast for men, and whatever be their returns of love to thee, thou wilt find both to be utterly vain and worthless. O place not thy confidence in man, nor lean upon a hollow reed; for “all flesh is as “graſs, and all the glory of man as the flower “of graſs; the graſs withereth, and the flower “thereof falleth away.”

*Isaiah xxxv.
6; xl. 6.*

4. Of men thou regardeſt only the outward appearance, and, therefore, art soon deceived; and while thou ſeekeft relief and comfort from others, thou muſt meet with disappointment and distress. If in all things thou ſeekeft only JESUS, *Wifd. vi. 13.* thou wilt ſurely find Him in all: and if thou ſeekeft thyſelf, thou wilt, indeed, find thyſelf, but to thy own deſtruction: for he, who in all things ſeeketh not JESUS alone, involveth himſelf in more evil than the world and all his ene-mies could heap upon him.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the Friendship of Jesus.

WHEN JESUS is present, all is well, and nothing seems difficult; but when he is absent, every thing seems sad and insupportable. When JESUS speaks not from within, all comfort is vile: but let Him speak only one word, and great is the consolation which will be felt. Did not Mary Magdalen rise immediately from the place where she sat weeping for the death of Lazarus, when Martha said to her, “The Master is come, and calleth for John xi. 28. thee?” Blessed is the hour, when JESUS calls us from affliction and tears, to partake of the joys of His Spirit.

2. How great is the aridity and hardness of thy heart, without JESUS! How great is its vanity and folly, when it desireth any good but Him! Is not the loss of Him greater than the loss of the world? — for what can the world Luke ix. 25. profit thee, without JESUS? To be without JESUS, is to be in the depths of hell: to be with Him, is to be in the sweets of Paradise. While JESUS is with thee, no enemy hath power to hurt Rom. viii. 31. thee. He that findeth JESUS, findeth a treasure of infinite value; a good, transcending all that can be called good. He that loseth JESUS, loseth Matt. xiii. 44.

more than the whole world. That man only is poor, who lives without JESUS; and that man only is rich, with whom JESUS delights to dwell.

3. It requires great skill to converse with JESUS, and great prudence to know how to keep Him. Be humble and peaceful, and JESUS will be with thee; be devout and meek, and He will dwell with thee. But thou mayest soon drive away JESUS from thy heart, and lose his Grace, by turning aside to the enjoyments of the world: and if thou drivest away and losest *Him*, to whom wilt thou then fly, and where wilt thou find a friend? Without a friend, life is miserable; and if JESUS be, above all others, thy chosen friend, life will be but affliction and distres. It is madness, therefore, to place thy confidence and delight in any other: rather choose that the whole world should combine against thee, than that JESUS should be offended at thy preferring the world to Him. Of all, therefore, that are dear to thee, let JESUS be the peculiar and sole object of thy love. Men are to be loved only for the sake of JESUS; but JESUS is to be loved for himself. JESUS alone is to be loved without reserve and without measure; because, of all that we can love, He alone is good and faithful.

Matt. v. 44. For his sake, and in the power of his love, thy enemies, as well as thy friends, are to be dear to thee; and let it be thy continual prayer for ALL, that all may be blest with the knowledge and love of CHRIST.

4. Do not desire to be particularly admired and praised ; for the praise of being good, is the prerogative of GOD ; who hath none like unto Himself. Neither desire to engage the affections of any particular person, nor suffer thy own affections to be engaged by any : but let JESUS dwell within thee, and in all good men.

5. Be pure and free from within, and let no affection to the creature perplex and enslave thee. Thou must have a heart divested of all selfish affections and earthly desires, before thou wilt have leisure and inclination to “ taste and see Pf. xxxiv. 8. how sweet the LORD is.” And truly thou mayest not arrive even at this state, without the prevention and attraction of His Grace ; which, by delivering thee from all earthly attractions, will cause thee to be one with Him ; and Him, one with thee.

6. When the grace of GOD thus visiteth a man, he hath then power to “ do all things ;” Pf. civ. 29. and when its influence is withdrawn, he feels himself in poverty and weakness ; exposed to the lash of every affliction. Yet, in such an extremity, thou must not despair ; but with a calm spirit resign thyself to the Divine Will, and for the glory of CHRIST patiently bear whatever befalls thee ; remembering, that summer followeth winter ; the day, the night ; and that, after the tempest, cometh the calm.

CHAPTER IX.

Of the Disconsolate State.



T is no difficult thing to despise human consolation, when we are possest of Divine: but it is transcendent greatness to bear the want of both; and, without self condolence, or the least regard for our own imaginary worth, patiently to suffer “desolation of “ heart” for the glory of GOD. What great matter is it to be cheerful and devout, while “the light of GOD’s countenance is lifted up “upon thee?”—for this is the hour that all creatures most desire. And what wonder, if he feels not the burthen, when he is supported by Omnipotence, and conducted by Truth.

2. We willingly seek something by way of consolation; and a man is with difficulty divested of himself. The holy martyr Lawrence overcame the world, and his affection for his bishop Sixtus; for, all that was delightful to him in this life, he despised; and for the love of CHRIST, bore patiently a separation from him, whom he chiefly loved. By the love of GOD, therefore, he overcame the love of man; and steadily preferred the Divine Will to human comforts. With the same resignation, must thou also, for

the love of GOD, learn to part with thy most needful and dearest friend. Nor bear it heavily at heart if a friend desert you ; knowing that we must all be separated, one day, to meet together in eternity.

3. It requires long and severe conflicts with one's self, to subdue the earthly and selfish nature, and turn all the desire of the soul to GOD. He that trusts to his own wisdom, is easily seduced to seek repose in human consolations : but he that truly loves CHRIST, and is a studious follower of virtue, turns not aside to such vain comforts, nor seeks after the delights of sense ; but rather chooses the severer exercises of self-denial, and, for the sake of CHRIST, to endure the most painful labours.

4. When, therefore, GOD bestows upon thee the consolations of the Spirit, receive them with all thankfulness : but, understand they are His gift, and not the reward of thy desert. Do not, in consequence, be elate, careless, and presuming ; but be more humble, more watchful, and more devout in all thy conduct : for the hour of light and peace will soon pass away, and that of darkness and temptation succeed. Yet, when consolation is taken away, do not immediately despair, but with humility and patience wait the return of the heavenly visitation ; for GOD, who is all powerful, may renew the bounties of His Grace in more abundant measures.

5. This vicissitude of day and night in the spiritual life, is neither new nor unexpected to those that are acquainted with the ways of GOD ; for the antient prophets and most eminent saints have all experienced alternate visitation and desertion. Hence the Royal Psalmist

Ps. xxx. 6.

thus describes his own case : “ When I was in “ prosperity,” says he, “ I said, I shall never be “ moved.” GOD’s grace being soon taken away, and feeling in himself the poverty of fallen nature, he adds ; “ Thou didst turn thy face from “ me, and I was troubled.” Yet in this disconsolate state he does not despair ; but with more ardour raises his prayer to GOD : “ Unto thee,

Ps. xxx. 8.

“ O LORD, will I cry, and I will make my sup-“ plication unto my GOD.” He then declares the fruit of his prayer, and thus acknowledges himself to have been heard : “ The LORD hath

Ps. liv. 4.

“ heard me, and hath had mercy upon me ; the “ LORD is become my helper.” And to shew how this mercy and help were manifested, he

Ps. xxx. 11.

adds ; “ thou hast turned my mourning into joy, “ and hast compassed me about with gladness.”

Now, if these things have happened to the greatest saints, surely, such poor and infirm creatures as we are, ought not to despair if we are sometimes elevated by fervour, and sometimes depressed by coldness ? — for the HOLY SPIRIT cometh and goeth “ according to the good pleasure of His Will :” and upon this principle

John iii. 8.

Eph. i. 5.

the blessed Job saith, “Thou visitest man in the morning, and of a sudden thou proveſt him.” Job vii. 18.

6. In what, therefore, can I hope, or in whom ought I to trust, but in GOD’s great mercy alone, and in the sole hope of heavenly grace? For, whether holy men, devout brethren, faithful friends, holy books, admirable tracts, the chant of psalms and hymns be present—all these delight not, avail little, when I am deserted by GOD’s grace, and left in the natural poverty of my condition. In such a state, no better remedy remains than meek and humble patience, and the surrender of my will to the Blessed Will of GOD.

7. I never yet found a man so holy and devout, as not to have experienced some diminution of Grace, and some occasional abstraction of spiritual fervour: and from this severe trial, no saint, at some period or other, has been exempt; whatever degree of rapture and elevation his spirit may have attained—for *he* is not worthy of the deep contemplation of GOD, who has not experienced some tribulation in his cause. This trial may always be considered as the sign of approaching comfort: for heavenly comfort is promised to those who are *proved* by temptations. “To Him that overcometh, will I give James i. 12. Rev. ii. 7. ‘to eat of the tree of Life.’”

8. The consolations of the Spirit are given to man to enable him to bear more firmly the

adversity of his fallen state. Temptation follows, when he is elated by his supposed excellence: and they are taken away, lest he be so much elevated with the gift as to forget the Giver.

9. The devil slumbereth not, nor is the flesh yet dead: be therefore continually prepared for contest; for both on the right hand and on the left thou art beset with enemies that are never at rest.

CHAPTER X.

Of Thankfulness for the Grace of GOD.

Job v. 7.



HY seekest thou rest, when thou art born to labour? Dispose thyself for patience, rather than for consolation; and for bearing the Cross, rather than for the participation of joy.

2. Who, among those that are devoted to the world, would not gladly receive the joys and consolations of the Spirit, if they could be always secured? The joys and consolations of the Spirit transcend all the delights of the world and the pleasures of sense: for these latter are either impure or vain. The former alone are holy, substantial, delightful, the fruits of virtue, infused by GOD into pure minds. But these

divine consolations, no man can enjoy at what time, and in what measure he pleases ; for the seasons of temptation return soon, and last long.

3. False freedom and great self-confidence oppose the Heavenly Visitation. GOD doeth well in giving us the grace of his consolation ; but man doeth ill in not surrendering the whole to him with gratitude. For which reason, the gifts of grace are not poured forth in us, because we are ungrateful towards their Author—not assigning them to their original fountain-head. Grace is always poured forth to Him who is grateful for former visitations.

4. I wish for no consolation that robs me of compunction ; nor aim at any contemplation that will exalt me into pride : for every thing that is high, is not holy ; nor is every desire pure ; nor is every thing that is sweet, good ; nor is every thing that is dear to man pleasing to GOD. But acceptable, beyond measure, is that Grace, by which I am made more humble and fearful, and more disposed to deny and renounce myself ; for he that hath experienced the divine gift, and hath been taught its infinite value, by feeling its loss, so far from daring to appropriate any good to himself, will rather acknowledge the poverty and nakedness of his fallen spirit. “ Render, therefore, unto GOD Matt. xxii. “ the things which are GOD’S,” and take to thyself that which is properly thy own ; in other

words, give Him the glory of all thy good, and leave for thyself only the shame and punishment of all thy evil.

Luke xiv. 10. 5. Set thyself in the lowest place, and the highest shall be given thee ; for the highest exists not without the lowest. The greatest saints in the fight of GOD are the least in their own esteem ; and the height of their glory is always in proportion to the depth of their humiliation.

Gal. v. 26. Those that are filled with true and heavenly glory, have no place for the desire of that which is earthly and vain ; being rooted and established in GOD, they cannot possibly be lifted up in self-exaltation. Whatever good they have, they acknowledge it to be received ; and ascribing the glory of it to the Supreme Author of Good, they “ seek not honour one of another, but the “ honour that cometh from GOD alone :” and they desire that GOD may be glorified in Himself, and in all his saints.

John v. 44.

6. Be grateful for what thou receivest, and thou wilt be deemed worthy to receive more. Let that which is thought the least of GOD'S gifts, be unto thee even as the greatest ; that which is held contemptible, as a singular favour. The dignity of the Giver confers dignity on all his gifts ; and none can be small that is bestowed at his hands. Even pain and punishment from Him are to be gratefully received ; for whatever He permitteth to befall us, He per-

mitteth it for the purpose of our Redemption. He that desireth to preserve the Grace of GOD, let him be thankful when it is given, and patient when it is taken away. Let him pray for its return; and be watchful and humble, that he may lose it no more.

CHAPTER XI.

*Of the Small Number of those that love
the Cross.*

ESUS hath many lovers of his heavenly kingdom, but few bearers of his Cross. He hath many that desire to partake of his comforts, but few to share in his distress. He finds many companions of his repast, but few of his abstinence. All are disposed to rejoice with Jesus, but few to suffer sorrow for his sake. Many follow him even to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the bitter cup. Many reverence his miracles, but few follow the ignominy of the Cross. Many love Jesus, while they are free from adversity; many praise and bless Him, while they receive his consolations: but if Jesus hide his face, and leave them but a little, their confidence is shaken, and they sink into murmur and despair.

2. But they who love Jesus for Jesus' sake, and not for their own personal comfort, bless Him in the depths of tribulation and distress, as well as in the highest state of consolation. Nay, should he be willing to withhold his consolations from them, they would still continue to be willing to praise Him, and to give Him thanks. O, mighty power of the pure love of JESUS, unadulterated with any base mixture of self-love and self-interest! Do not they deserve the name of hirelings, who are for ever seeking after comfort? Do not all prove that they are lovers of themselves, and not of CHRIST, who desire and think of nothing but their own convenience and gain?

3. Where is the man that serveth GOD, without the hope of reward? That spiritual man is rarely found, who is blind to all worldly desires. Who will find the true “poor in spirit?” This is “the pearl of great price,” to be sought after to the utmost boundaries. Though a man give all his substance to feed the poor, it is nothing; though he undergo severe penance, still it is of little importance; though he comprehend the vast extent of science, yet he is far behind; and though he hath the splendour of illustrious virtue, and the ardour of exalted devotion, still he will want much if he want the “one thing needful.” What is this? The abandoning of all creatures about him—to go wholly

1 Cor. xiii.
3, &c.

out of himself—to retain not the least leaven of self-love; but, when he hath done all things which he knows he ought to have done, to think that he hath yet done nothing.

4. He will not weigh in his mind that he may be accounted great, but that he may be considered an unprofitable servant, in conformity with the truth, which says, “when ye Luke xvii. 10. have done all that is commanded you, declare yourselves to be unprofitable servants.” This is that poverty and nakedness of spirit, which can say with the Psalmist, Ps. lxxxvi. 1. LORD, “I am poor and needy!” And yet there is none so rich, none so free, none so powerful, as he, who, renouncing himself and all creatures, can place himself in the most humiliating condition.

CHAPTER XII.

Of the Necessity of Bearing the Cross.



HIS saying seems hard to many: “De- John vi. 61. ny thyself, take up thy Cross, and Matt. xvi. 24. follow me.” But a harder saying will be heard, when the same Divine voice shall pronounce, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into Matt. xxv. 41-6. everlasting fire!” They, therefore, who can now willingly hear and follow the word of the Cross, will not be then terrified at the sentence

of eternal damnation. The banner of the Cross will be displayed in heaven, when the **LORD** shall come to judgment. Then, all the servants of the Cross, who, during their lives, conformed themselves to **CHRIST** crucified, shall draw near to Christ the Judge with great confidence. Why, then, dost thou fear to take up the Cross which will direct thee to the path that leads to the Kingdom of **GOD**?

2. In the Cross is life ; in the Cross, health ; in the Cross, protection from every enemy. From the Cross are derived heavenly meekness, true fortitude, the joys of the Spirit, the conquest of self, the perfection of holiness. There is no redemption, no hope of eternal life, but in the Cross. Take up thy Cross, therefore, and follow **Jesus** in the path that leads to everlasting life. He hath gone before, bearing that Cross upon which He died for thee, that thou mightest follow, patiently bearing thy own Cross, and upon that die to thyself for Him : and if we die with Him, we shall also live with Him ; “ if we are partakers of his sufferings, partakers “ also shall we be of his consolation.”

John xix. 17. Rom. vi. 8.

3. Behold, all consists in the death of **SELF** upon the Cross ; and there is no means to obtain life and peace, but by daily dying upon the Cross to all the appetites and passions of fallen nature. Go where thou wilt, seek after what methods thou pleasest to accomplish thy Redemption,

thou canst not find a sublimer way above, nor a more secure way below, than this — of dying upon the Cross.

4. Dispose thyself, and order every thing, after thy proper will and desire; — yet thou shalt meet with some evil or inconvenience, to be borne willingly or unwillingly: and thus shalt always find THE CROSS. Thou wilt feel either pain of body, or distress and anguish of spirit. Sometimes thou wilt feel to be deserted of God: sometimes thy neighbour will put thy endurance to the test; and, what is more than this, thou wilt sometimes feel a burthen within thyself, which no human help can remove, and no earthly comfort lighten; but, as long as it is the Will of God to continue it upon thee, thou must bear it. It is God's will that thou shouldest learn to bear tribulation without comfort: that thy submission to him may be entire, and that thou mayest become more humble in consequence.

5. No one can have so thorough a sense of the sufferings of CHRIST as he whom it hath chanced to suffer in the same manner. The Cross, therefore, is always ready, and waits for thee in every place. Run where thou wilt, thou canst not avoid it; for wherever thou runnest, thou takest *Thyself* with thee, and art always sure of finding thyself. Turn, either to the things which are above, or those which are

below; to that which is within, or that which is without thee;— and in all these thou wilt certainly find THE CROSS. If thou wouldest enjoy inward peace, and obtain the unfading crown of glory, it is necessary that, in every

Luke xxi. 19. place, and in all events, thou “ possess thy soul “ in patience.”

6. If thou bear the Cross willingly, it will bear thee, and lead thee to the desired end—

Isaiah li. 11. beyond the reach of suffering, where “ sorrow “ and mourning shall flee away.” But if thou bearest it unwillingly, it will be a burthen to thee, and gall thee more and more: and yet thou *must* sustain it. If thou reject *one* Cross, without doubt thou shalt find another:—and perhaps a more insupportable one.

7. Thinkest thou to avoid that, from which no human being hath been exempt? Who, among the saints, hath accomplished his pilgrimage in this world without adversity and distress? Even our blessed LORD passed not one hour of his life, without tasting “ the cup that “ was given him to drink:” and, of himself, He faith, that “ it behoved him to suffer, and to “ rise from the dead, and so to enter into his “ glory.” And why dost thou seek any other path but “ THE ROYAL PATH OF THE HOLY “ CROSS?” The life of CHRIST was a continual “ Cross: one unbroken chain of sufferings: and desirest thou only repose and joy? Thou art

John xviii. 11.

Luke xxiv. 26. 46.

deceived, wretchedly deceived, if thou expectest any thing but tribulation ; for this mortal life is Job. xiv. 1. full of misery, and every part of it is inscribed with the Cross.

8. The regenerate man, as he becomes more spiritualized, has a quicker discernment of the Cross, wherever it meets him ; for the punishment of his exile increases in proportion to his love of GOD. But this man, thus afflicted on all sides, derives hope of consolation even from his sufferings ; for he reapeth fruit in abundance from the bearing of his own Cross. While he spontaneously subjecteth himself to it, the whole burden of tribulation is converted into a confidence in divine consolation ; and by how much the flesh is worn down by affliction, by so much the spirit is strengthened by inward grace. And sometimes, to such a degree is he comforted from tribulation and adversity, from his love of conformity to the cross of CHRIST, that he wisheth not to live a moment without them : considering himself more acceptable to GOD in proportion to his endurance of severer afflictions.

9. This desire of suffering is not the effect of any power inherent in man, but is the fruit of Gal. v. 16, the Grace of CHRIST, operating so powerfully ^{24.} in the frail flesh, as to make it love and embrace *that*, which it would naturally abhor and shun. It is not in man to love and bear the Cross ; to

¹ Cor. ix. 27. resist the appetites of the body, and bring them
 Phil. iv. 13. under subjection to the Spirit; to shun honours; to receive affronts with meekness; to despise himself, and to wish to be despised by others; to bear with resignation the loss of fortune, health, and friends; and to have no desire after the prosperity of this world. If thou dependest upon thyself, thou wilt find that thou canst do nothing of the kind: but if thou trustest in God, strength shall be given to thee from on high, and the world and the flesh shall be put under thy feet.

² Cor. i. 4. Fortified by this confidence, and defended by the Cross of CHRIST, thou needest not fear the efforts of thy adversary the devil.

10. Dispose thyself, therefore, like a true and faithful servant, to bear with fortitude the Cross of CHRIST, to which he was nailed from his love of thee. Prepare thy spirit to suffer patiently the innumerable inconveniences and troubles of this miserable life; for these thou wilt find, Matt. xx. 22, wherever thou runnest, or wherever thou hidest thyself. It behoveth things thus to remain; and it is patient suffering alone that can either disarm their power, or heal the wounds they have made. Drink freely and affectionately of thy LORD's bitter cup, if thou desirest to manifest thy friendship for Him, and "the part thou hast with Him." Resign to the will of God the dispensation of his comforts, and let him grant them, "as it seemeth unto Him good."

John xiii. 8.

Wish only for the power of bearing tribulations, and account it thy choicest blessing ; for “ the sufferings of the present time,” if they were all accumulated for thy portion, “ are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be Rom. viii. 18. revealed in thee.”

11. When thou hast reached this point, that the love of CHRIST shall make tribulation both sweet and profitable, then all shall be well with thee, and thou wilt have found the gate of Paradise : but while every tribulation is grievous, and thou seekest to avoid it, thou canst not be otherwise than wretched ; and what thou labourest to shun will follow thee wheresoever thou goest. The patient enduring of the Cross, and the death of Self upon it, will more quickly lead to the possession of life and peace. Though, like St. Paul, thou wert “ caught up to the third 2 Cor. xii. 2. heaven,” thou wouldest not be thereby exempt from suffering : for, of St. Paul himself, our Saviour faith, “ I will shew him how great Acts ix. 16. things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” To suffer, therefore, is thy portion ; if it pleaseth thee to love JESUS, and to serve him perpetually.

12. O, that thou wert worthy to suffer any “ shame for the name of JESUS ! ”—what glory Acts v. 41. would be laid up in store for thyself, what joy for all the saints of GOD ! what edification excited in thy neighbour ! Though patience be

extolled by all, yet few are willing to suffer: but thou mayest well suffer a little for CHRIST, when men endure so much for the world.

13. Know, for a certainty, that thy life must be a continual death to animal appetites; and know also, that the more perfectly that any one dies to himself, the more truly will he begin to live to GOD. No man is qualified to understand heavenly truths, till he has subdued his impatience, and is ready to suffer adversity for CHRIST's sake. Nothing is more acceptable to GOD, and more beneficial to the soul, than to suffer for the sake of CHRIST; and if the condition of thy life was left to thy choice, thou shouldest prefer suffering affliction for the sake of CHRIST, to the uninterrupted enjoyments of the world; for this will render thee more conformable to CHRIST, and to all the saints. Indeed, the perfection of our state, and our acceptableness with GOD, depend more upon the patient suffering of long and severe distress, than upon continual comforts and luxuries.

If any thing better, or more useful to man's salvation, could have been devised, than that of BEARING THE CROSS, Christ would have shewn it both by precept and example. But, from his disciples, and from all who desire to follow Him, He has required the bearing of the Cross; and

Matt. xvi. 24. without exception has said to all, "If any man

“ will come after me, let him deny himself,
“ take up his Cross, and follow me.”

15. When, therefore, we have read all books, and examined all methods, the conclusion is one and the same thing; which is, that “ through much tribulation, we must enter into the Acts xiv. 22. Kingdom of GOD.”





BOOK THE THIRD.

Of Divine Illumination.

CHAPTER I.

*Of the Spiritual Communication between CHRIST
and the Faithful Soul.*

Pf. lxxxv. 8.



WILL hear what the LORD my GOD will say within me.” Blessed is the soul that listeneth to the voice of the LORD, and from his Own Lips receiveth the word of consolation. Blessed are the ears that receive the soft whispers of the Divine Breath, and exclude the noise and tumult of the world; Matt. xiii. 16. yea, truly blessed are they, who, deaf to the voice that soundeth without, are attentive only to the truth teaching within. Blessed are the eyes, which, blind to material objects, are fixed only upon those that are spiritual. Blessed are they that examine the internal state of things; and, by daily exercises, more and more prepare the mind for the comprehension of heavenly truths. Blessed are all who delight in the ser-

vice of GOD ; and who shake off all the cares and perplexities of the world.

2. Consider these things, O my soul ! and exclude all entrance of sensual desire ; that thou mayest be able to hear and understand the voice of the LORD thy GOD.

Thy Beloved speaketh again. “ I am thy Life, thy Peace, and thy Salvation : keep thyself united to me, and thou shalt find rest. Dismiss temporal concerns : seek for those connected with eternity : for what are temporal enjoyments, but delusions ? and what can all creatures avail thee, if thou art forsaken by thy Creator ? Abandoning, therefore, all created things, render thyself up peaceably and faithfully to thy Creator, that thou mayest be able to attain true felicity.

Ephes. ii. 14.
John xiv. 6.

CHAPTER II.

CHRIST, who is the Truth, speaketh within, to the Soul, without the sound of Words.



PEAK, LORD, for thy servant heareth. I am thy servant ; give me understanding, that I may know Thy Testimonies.” Incline my heart to the words of thy Mouth : “ let thy speech distil as the dew !” 2. The children of Israel once said to Moses,

1 Sam. iii. 10.
Pſ. cxix. 34.

Deut. xxxii. 2.

Exod. xx. 19. “ Speak thou with us, and we will hear : but “ let not GOD speak with us, lest we die.” I pray not, O LORD, in this manner : no, I pray not so ; but rather, with the prophet Samuel, humbly and ardently entreat, “ Speak, LORD, “ for thy servant heareth.” Let not Moses speak to me, nor any of the prophets, but speak Thou, O LORD GOD, the inspirer and enlightener of all the prophets ; for Thou alone, without their aid, canst perfectly instruct me ; but, without Thee, they can profit me nothing.

2. They, indeed, can pronounce words, but cannot impart spirit : they speak eloquently, but, if Thou art silent, they warm not the heart.

Luke xxiv. 45. They teach the letter, but Thou openest the sense : they utter the mystery, but Thou revealest its meaning : they publish thy laws, but

If. xlii. 16. Thou helpest to carry them into effect : they

Ecclus. ii. 10. point out the way to life, but Thou bestowest strength to walk in it : their influence is only external, but Thou instructest and enlightenest

1 Cor. iii. 6. the mind : “ they water, but Thou “ givest the “ increase :” their voice soundeth in the ear, but it is Thou that givest understanding to the heart.

3. Let not, therefore, Moses speak to me : but do Thou, O LORD my GOD, Eternal Truth ! lest, being only outwardly warned, but not inwardly quickened, I die, and be found

unfruitful. Let not the word be only heard, but obeyed; not be only known, loved, professed, but kept. "Speak," therefore, "LORD, " for thy servant heareth." Thou only "hast John vi. 68. "the words of eternal life." O speak, to the comfort of my soul; to the renovation of my heavenly nature; and to the eternal praise and glory and honour of Thyself.

4. Son, hear my words; words, full of sweetness, infinitely transcending the learning of all the philosophers and wise men of this world. "The words that I speak, they are Spirit, and John vi. 63. "they are Life;" not to be weighed in the balance of the human understanding, nor perverted to the indulgence of vain curiosity; but to be heard in silence, and received with meek simplicity, and ardent affection. Then I said; "Blessed is the man, whom Thou instructest, "O LORD, and teachest him out of thy Law; "that Thou mayest give him rest from the days "of adversity, lest he be left desolate upon the "earth."

5. "I (saith the Lord) taught the prophets Hebr. i. 1, 2. "from the beginning, and even till now cease "not to speak unto all: but many are deaf to "my voice" Many listen more attentively to the word, than to GOD. They more readily submit to sensual appetites, than to the mild restraints of the Holy Will. The world promiseth only small and transitory joys, and a great

many serve it with avidity. I promise that which is supreme and everlasting, and the hearts of mortals are untouched. Where is the man that serveth and obeyeth me with that solicitude with which he obeys the world and its rulers? Even the sea exclaimeth, “ be thou ashamed, O “ Zidon !”—because, for a trifling reward a long journey is cheerfully undertaken, but, to obtain eternal life, scarcely a foot is lifted by many from the ground. Sordid gain is sought after ; and for a single piece of money there is sometimes a scandalous litigation ; days and nights are sometimes devoted for so small and perishing a matter. But, shameful torpidity ! for unchangeable good, for an inestimable recompence, for unfullied glory, and endless happiness—even a moderate toil is grudged !

6. “ Shame upon thee, therefore, O slothful “ and discontented servant !”—that the children of the world should be more readily prepared to seek after destruction, than thou to obtain Eternal Life ; that *they* should rejoice more in vanity, than *thou* in the Truth. Their hope is, indeed, vain, as that on which it is built ; but my promise deceives no one, nor sends him, who confides in me, “ empty away.” What I have promised, I will give ; what I have said, I will fulfil. If any one will preserve his affection

Isaiah xlvi. 11. Matt. x. 22. towards me faithful, even to the end, “ I am the rewarder of them that diligently seek me : I

“ am he, which searcheth” and tryeth “ the hearts” of the devout.

7. Write my Words upon thy heart, and ponder them day and night: for in the time of temptation, thou wilt find their truth and efficacy. What thou readest and understandest not, thou shalt know in the day of visitation. I visit man, both by trials and comforts; and continually read him two lessons;—one, to rebuke his selfishness and impurity; and the other, to excite him to the pursuit of holiness. He that hath my Word, and despiseth it, hath that which “ shall judge him in the last day.”

John xii. 48.

CHAPTER III.

A Prayer to implore the Grace of Devotion.



LORD my GOD, Thou art my Supreme and consummate Good! And what am I, that I should dare to address Thee? I am thy least and thy poorest servant; an abject worm; much more poor and contemptible than I know and dare to express. Yet, remember me, O LORD, I am nothing; have nothing; can do nothing. Thou alone art just, and holy, and good. Thou canst do all things; afford all things; and canst fill all things: the heart of the impenitent is alone left un-

touched and unvisited. Remember thy mercies; and fill my heart with thy grace: thou, who desirest not that thy works should strive in vain.

2. How can I sustain the misery of this fallen life, unless Thy Truth enlighten me, and Thy Strength support me! O turn not thy face from me; delay not thy visitation; suspend not thy consolations; lest my soul become like a barren and “thirsty land where no water is!”
 Pf. ii. 11.
 Pf. cxliii. 6.
 10.
 John viii. 58; xvii. 5.
 Gen. xvii. 1.

LORD, “teach me to do thy will;” teach me to walk before Thee in humility and worthiness: for thou art my Wisdom, who knowest me in truth, and didst know me before I was made.

3. Son (faith CHRIST) walk before me in truth, and in singleness of heart seek me continually. He that walketh before me in truth, shall be defended against the assaults of evil spirits, and the truth shall deliver him from the delusions and calumnies of wicked men. “If John viii. 32, “the Truth make thee free, thou shalt be free
 36. “indeed:” and shalt care nothing about the vain commendations and censures of the world.

4. LORD, thy Word is Truth: so, I beseech Thee, let it be done unto thy servant. Let Thy Truth teach, protect, and preserve me to my final redemption. Let it deliver me from every evil temper and inordinate desire, so shall I walk

before Thee in “the glorious liberty of the Rom. viii. 21.
“children of GOD!”

5. I will teach thee (faith Truth) what is my Rom. xii. 2.
“good and acceptable and perfect will.” Think
on thy sins with deep compunction and self-ab-
horrence; and think not much of thyself on
account of good works. In thyself, thou art a
sinner; exposed to, and bound by, the chain of
many passions. Thou art always tending to
nothing, and to vanity; thou soon wavest;
art soon subdued; soon disturbed; and soon
overwhelmed. There is, in thee, no good which
thou canst glory in; but much evil, from which
thou oughtest to be abased: for thou art much
more powerless than thou art able to compre-
hend.

6. Let nothing therefore appear to thee great
from all that thou doest; for thou hast nothing
great, nothing valuable, nothing worthy of ad-
miration and praise, nothing exalted, good, and
desirable, but that which appertains to eternity.
Let eternal truth delight thee above all things;
sinfulness displease thee above all things. Fear,
abhor, and shun, nothing so much as thy vices
and sins; which ought to offend thee more than
earthly losses.

7. Some men, (continues the voice of hea-
venly Truth) walk not before me in simplicity
of heart; but, moved by a certain curiosity and
arrogance, neglect themselves and their own fal-

vation, in order to search into the counsels of Infinite Wisdom, and to fathom the deep things of GOD. These often fall into great temptations and sins ; and their pride and presumption I continually resist. But do thou fear the judgments of GOD ; tremble at the wrath of Omnipotence ; be unwilling to discuss the proceedings of the Most High ; but search into thy own iniquities, into how much evil thou hast done, and how much good thou hast neglected.

Some place their religion in books ; some, in images ; and some in pomp and splendor of external worship : these honour “ me with their “ lips, but their heart is far from me.” But there are others, that, with enlightened and purified affections and understandings, discern the glory which man has lost, and pant for its recovery : these hear with reluctance of earthly matters, and even lament the necessity of administering to the wants of nature : and these hear and understand what the Spirit of Truth speaketh in their hearts : for it exhorteth them to withdraw their affection from things on earth, and to “ set it on things above ;” to neglect the world, and day and night to aspire after reunion with GOD.

II. xxix. 13.

Matt. x. 20.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Wonderful Effect of Divine Love.

BLESS Thee, O Heavenly Father, the Father of my LORD JESUS CHRIST, that thou hast vouchsafed to remember so poor and helpless a creature! O Father of mercies, and GOD of all consolation! I give thee most humble and hearty thanks, that unworthy as I am of all comfort, thou hast been pleased to visit me. Blessing and glory be unto thee, and thy only Begotten Son, and Thy Holy Spirit, the Comforter, for ever and ever! 2 Cor. i. 3.

2. O LORD my GOD, who hast mercifully numbered me among the objects of thy redeeming love, when thou art pleased to visit me, all that is within me shall rejoice: for thou art my Pf. lix. 16, 17. Glory and my Joy; my Hope, and my Refuge in the day of my distress. But, because my love is yet feeble, and my virtue imperfect, I have continual need of thy Strength and Consolation: do Thou, therefore, visit me, and instruct me Job xxxiii. 16. in holy discipline; Deliver me from malignant passions and sensual desires; that, being healed and purified, I may love with more ardour, may suffer with more patience, and persevere with more constancy.

3. Love is, indeed, a transcendent excellence ; an essential and sovereign good. It maketh the heavy burden light, and the rugged path smooth ; it beareth all things without feeling their weight, and from every adversity taketh away the sting.

4. The love of JESUS is a noble love, prompting to difficult attempts, and kindling the desire of greater perfection. It continually looketh up to Heaven, and abhors the restraints of its earthly prison. Col. iii. 2.

It panteth after its original and native freedom ; and, lest its intellectual eye should be darkened by earthly objects, and its will captivated by earthly good, or subdued by earthly evil, sighs for deliverance from this fallen world.

5. This love surpasseth all sweetnes, strength, height, depth, and breadth : nothing is more pleasing, nothing more full, nothing more excellent in heaven, or in earth : for “Love is

¹ John iv. 7. “born of GOD ;” and it cannot find rest in created things, but resteth only in Him from whom it is derived.

6. Love flies, runs, rejoiceth : it is free, and will not be confined. It giveth all for all, and possesseth all in all ; for it possesseth the Supreme Good, from Whom, as from its fountain, all good eternally proceeds. It respecteth no gifts ; but transcending all imparted excellence, turneth wholly to the Giver of every perfect gift.

7. Love knoweth no limits, feeleth no burthen, considereth no labour : it desireth to do

more than it can effect ; it is never restrained by apparent impossibility, but conceiveth that all things are possible, and that all are lawful ; it, therefore, attempteth every labour, however difficult ; and accomplisheth many, under which the soul, that loveth not, faints, and falls prostrate.

8. Love is watchful, and though it slumbereth, doth not sleep : it is fatigued, but not exhausted ; straitened, but not enslaved ; alarmed by danger, but not confounded ; and, like a vigorous and active flame, is ever burning upwards, and securely passeth through all opposition.

9. He that loveth, feels the force of this exclamation, “My GOD ! my Love ! Thou “art “wholly mine, and I am wholly thine ! ” And when this is the voice of Love, it reacheth unto Heaven.

10. Expand my heart with Love, that I may feel its transforming power, and may even be dissolved in its holy fire. Let me be possessed by Love, and ravished from myself by fervor and ecstasy ! Let the lover’s song be mine, “ I will “ follow my beloved on high ! ” Let my soul rejoice exceedingly in Love, and lose itself in thy Praise ! Let me love Thee more than myself ; let me love myself only for thy Sake ; and in Thee love all others ; as that perfect law requireth, which is a ray of the Infinite Love that shines in Thee.

Isaiah xxix. 5.

Cant. iv. 9.

Isaiah v. 1.

11. Love is swift, sincere, pious, pleasant, and agreeable; brave, patient, faithful, prudent,
1 Cor. xiii. 5. long-suffering, and generous; and never seeketh itself; for that which seeketh itself, falls immediately from Love.

12. Love is circumspect, humble, and equitable; not soft and effeminate, fickle, and vain; but sober, chaste, constant and persevering, peaceful and calm, and free from the influence of sensible objects. It is submissive and obedient to all, mean and contemptible in its own esteem, devout and thankful to GOD, trusting and hoping always in him; and when his consolations are suspended, faithfully dependent upon his Mercy; for, in this fallen life, Love is not exempt from pain.

13. He who is not prepared to suffer all things, and, renouncing his own will, to adhere invariably to the will of his Beloved, is unworthy of the name of a Lover. A Lover should endure the severest labours and bitterest afflictions on account of his Beloved; and to let nothing turn him aside from the Supreme and Infinite Good.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Proof of a True Lover.

 HOU art not yet a brave and prudent lover, my Son. Thou art too anxious after consolation ; and the least opposition makes thee relinquish thy undertakings. A brave Lover stands firm in temptations ; and disbelieves and despises the flattering persuasions of the enemy : and, whether in prosperity or adversity, makes ME his supreme delight. He that loves with purity, considers not the gift of the lover, but the love of the giver : he values the affection more than the tokens of it, and places all gifts infinitely below the donor. A noble lover does not repose himself in gifts, but in ME—above every gift. Nor must he give up the whole as *lost*, if, sometimes, he thinks of me and my Saints less warmly or kindly than he could wish. For the pleasing rapture, which is sometimes felt, is the effect of present grace, to give a foretaste of heavenly joys ; which, however, must not be invariably depended upon, because it cometh and goeth at my good pleasure. To struggle against the incidental evil motions of fallen nature, and the evil suggestions of the Devil, is a proof both of virtue and of

great merit; and if thou dost this with faithful perseverance, thou wilt give true proof of that Christian fortitude which will be distinguished by the crown of victory.

2. Let not, therefore, strange phantasms distract thee, of whatever nature they may be. Maintain only a firm resolution, and an upright intention towards GOD. Nor consider it as an illusion, if, being suddenly elevated into ecstasy, thou as suddenly fall into thy accustomed foolishness of heart: for this change thou rather unwillingly suffereſt, than procureſt. And while it is involuntary, and thou strivest against it, it is a merit, and not a proof of perdition.

3. Know, that it is the continual labour of thy inveterate enemy, to suppress every holy desire in thy soul, and to divert thee from every holy exercise; from the memory of my passion, from the cultivation of the Saints, and from the profitable recollection of thy numerous sins; from the watchful keeping of thy own heart, and from the firm resolution of pressing onward in virtue. He brings on many wicked thoughts to create in thee disgust and abhorrence, that he may withdraw thee from prayer and sacred reading. He is offended and alarmed at an humble acknowledgment of sin; and, if possible, would cause thee to cease from the Holy Communion.

4. Believe him not, nor heed his power,

though he thus continually spreadeth his deceitful net. When he suggesteth vain thoughts and impure desires, say to him, “ Get thee behind Matt. iv. 10. me, unclean spirit! blush, wretch! and be “ confounded at the foul whispers of thy unholy “ breath. Depart from me, most detestable se- “ ducer! thou shalt have no part in me: for “ JESUS is with me; and like a mighty warrior “ He will protect me, and thou shalt stand con- “ founded. I would rather die in extremity of Jerem. xx. 2. torment, than consent to thy impious will. “ Hold thy peace, therefore, and be dumb for “ ever; for I will hearken to thee no longer, “ though thou shouldest invent new stratagems “ against me. The LORD is my Light and my Ps. xxvii. 1-3. Salvation; of whom shall I be afraid? Though “ an host should encamp against me, my heart “ shall not fear. The LORD is my Strength and “ my Redeemer!”

5. Strive, like a valiant soldier; and if thou sometimes fallest, through human frailty, rise immediately with redoubled vigour, depending upon a more abundant succour of my Grace. Only beware of pride and self-complacence; for by these many are betrayed into error, and fall into almost incurable blindness. Let the destruction of the proud, vainly presuming upon their own strength, be to thee a perpetual admonition of the blessings of Humility.

CHAPTER VI.

Of concealing the Grace of Devotion under the Veil of Humility.



Y son, it will be more useful and secure to thee to hide the grace of devotion, and to restrain it from exalting thee into pride. Boast not of it to others, nor ponder it too much in thy own mind ; but rather distrust thyself, and be more fearful in consequence of the gift. That ardour is not to be relied on, which may soon change into a contrary temperament, and give place to coldness.

2. During the enjoyment of Grace, recollect how poor and miserable thou wert without it. The progress of the spiritual life dependeth not upon the enjoyment of consolation, but upon bearing its privation with humility, self-denial, and patience ; so as not to relinquish prayer, or remit any of thy accustomed holy exercises. But that, with a willing mind, and thy best exertions, thou perform all thy duties ; and not wholly neglect thyself, upon pretence of present barrenness, or disquietude of mind. There are many, who, when matters turn not out as they expected, immediately become impatient or slothful : but “ the way of man is not in himself,”

and it belongeth unto GOD to give, and to comfort when he pleaseth—and as much as he pleaseth, and to whom he pleaseth—and nothing more.

3. Some inconsiderate persons, by an improper use of the grace of devotion, have destroyed all its salutary effects; because they have attempted to do more than they could perform: not considering their own littleness, but rather following the affections of the heart, than the judgment of their reason. These, by presuming upon more than was pleasing to their Maker, have lost the Grace that was vouchsafed unto them; and although they had exalted themselves “as the eagles, and set their nest amongst the stars,” yet have they become wretched and poverty stricken; that, humbled and depressed, they might learn not to fly with their own wings, but to put their trust in those of the Almighty.

Isaiah xiv. 13-

15.

4. The inexperienced in the spiritual life, will soon be deceived and shipwrecked, unless they govern themselves by the counsels of discreet men. They who are “wise in their own conceits,” will experience a more fatal and perilous end, if they are unwilling to be snatched from their previous thoughts. He who is wise in his own estimation, will rarely submit himself with humility to the direction of others. Better is a moderate understanding with humili-

Rom. xi. 25.

lity, and a small intelligence, than a great treasure of science with vain self-complacency. Better is it to have little, than much—wherewith thou mayest be proud.

5. That man acteth indiscreetly, who gives himself up to the joy of present riches, forgetful of his former poverty, and of that chaste fear of GOD which fears to lose the Grace it hath received. Nor has *he* attained the fortitude of true wisdom, who, in the day of distress and sadness, suffers his mind to be subdued by despair, and deprived of that confidence in me which is my right, and his best support: but, those that are most elate in time of peace, are often most fearful and dejected in time of war.

6. If thou wert always meek and lowly, and couldest keep thy spirit under good rule and moderation, thou wouldest not so often incur danger, nor fall into sin. It is good counsel in the hour of spiritual fervour, to consider how it will be with thee when this light is withdrawn. And when that change takes place, think whether that light can be restored, which, for thy instruction, and my glory, I have suffered to depart for a season.

7. Such a trial of the vicissitude of light and darkness, will be more useful than the constant gratification of thy own wishes and desires; for merits are not to be estimated by the number of visions and consolations; nor by critical know-

ledge of Holy Scripture ; nor by exaltation to superior dignity and power ; but by being grounded in true humility, and filled with Divine Charity ; by seeking, in all that is done, the Glory of GOD with purity and integrity ; by knowing and despising oneself as nothing and vanity ; and by rejoicing more in contempt and abasement, than in honour and esteem.

CHAPTER VII.

Of Self Abasement in the Sight of GOD.



HALL I take upon me to speak unto my LORD, who am but dust and ashes ?" Gen. xvii. 27.
If I repute myself too highly, behold, thou standest in judgment against me, and my own iniquities bear such witness against me, that I am unable to deny. But if I debase and vilify myself, if I empty my heart of all self-esteem, and become humble as the dust of which I am made, then shall thy grace be propitious unto me ; then Thy Light will be nearest to my heart ; and even the smallest degree of self-esteem shall be submerged, and lost for ever, in the abyss of my nothingness. There, thou shewest me myself, and teachest me what I am, what I have been, and from whence I came ; for I am nothing, and knew it not.

2. When I am left to myself, behold, I am all weakness and misery ! but if Thy Light suddenly revisit me, my weakness is made strong, and my misery turned into joy. And greatly wonderful it is, that I am thus so soon revived, and embraced so kindly by thyself—I, who, of my own proper weight, had sunk to the lowest depths. But this is the pure effect of Thy love ; — preventing me in all holy desires, succouring me in all necessities, protecting me from imminent dangers, and snatching me, as I may truly say, from innumerable evils.

3. By the love of myself, I lost myself ; but by the love and pursuit of Thee alone, I have both found myself and Thee : and thy love hath more profoundly penetrated me from my own nothingness. For Thou, O Saviour, hast been merciful unto me, beyond all that I could dare to hope or to ask.

4. Blessed be Thy Name, O my GOD ! that, unworthy as I am of the least of all thy mercies, this greatness and infinite goodness have never ceased to heap such innumerable benefits upon ^{2.} Isaiah xxxiii. me. O turn us back to Thee again, that we may be grateful, humble, and devoted to thy will : for thou art our safety, our virtue, and our strength.

CHAPTER VIII.

That all Things are to be referred to GOD, as to the ultimate End ; and that the World being despised, the Service of GOD is sweet.

 F thou wouldest be truly happy, my Son, make ME the supreme and ultimate end of all thy thoughts and desires. This will purify thy affections, which are too often perverted to thyself and to thy fellow creatures. If thou seekest thyself exclusively in all things, thou wilt quickly find in thyself both weakness and barrenness. Refer, therefore, all things to me, as the giver of every gift ; the fountain head, and the supreme Good, from whom all excellence in the creature is derived, and to whom alone the praise of excellence is due.

2. From me, as from a living fountain, the little and the great, the rich and the poor, draw Rev. xiii. 16 ; the water of life ; and he that willingly and xxii. 6. freely drinks it to my glory, shall receive grace John iv. 14. for grace : but he that glories in any thing apart from me, or delights in any good not referred to me, cannot be established in true joy, nor can dilate in fullness of heart ; but must be sore let and constantly harassed. Do not, therefore,

arrogate any good thyself, nor ascribe good to any other creature, but give the whole to GOD; without whom, man hath nothing. I, who have given all, desire to receive the whole in return: and require of every creature the tribute of thanksgiving and praise. In the splendour of this truth, all vain glory vanisheth away.

3. When heavenly Grace and true Love have taken possession of thy heart, it will no longer be the prey of envy, hatred, and partial affections; for divine love conquereth all things, and expands all the energies of the soul. If, therefore, thou art truly wise, thou wilt hope only

¹ Cor. xiii. 4.

Matt. xix. 17. in me, and rejoice only in me: for “there is Luke xviii. “but one that is good, and that is God;” who ^{19.} is to be blessed and praised above all, and in all.

Ps. xxxi. 19.

4. I will now speak again, O LORD, and will not be silent. I will say to my King, and my GOD, who sitteth in the highest heaven, “O “how great” and manifold are the treasures of “thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them “that fear Thee!” But what art thou, O LORD, to those that love Thee, and serve Thee with all their heart? Truly unspeakable is the sweetness of thy contemplation, which thou largely impartest to them that love thee.

Job x. 8.

Isaiah lvii. 18.

5. And herein chiefly thou declarest the force of thy love, in that, when I was not, thou madest me; and when I strayed far from thee, thou broughtest me home again, and commandedst

that I should serve and love thee. O fountain of perpetual Love, what shall I say concerning Thee! How can I forget Thee, who hast condescended to remember me—pining and perishing in sinful nature! Beyond all hope thou hast shewn mercy to thy servant; and beyond all desert thou hast shewn him mercy and friendship. What can I render Thee for such Grace? *Ps. cxvi. 12.* for it is not given unto all, that, renouncing all things and the world, they may follow Thee in “the narrow path that leadeth unto life.” *Matt. vii. 14.*

6. But, is it a great thing thus to serve **THEE**, whom all creatures are bound to serve? It ought not to be thought a great thing to serve Thee; but on the contrary, I should consider it a great and marvellous thing, that thou hast deigned to accept of the services of so poor and unworthy a creature as myself, and to assent to the petitions of thy beloved.

7. **LORD**, all that I have, all the ability by which I am made capable of serving Thee, are thine; and Thou, therefore, rather servest me. Behold, the heavens and the earth, which are *Deut. iv. 19.* continually ready to execute thy will, are created to the ministering of man; and what is more, thy holy “Angels are ordained ministering spirits, and sent forth to minister for them “who shall be heirs of salvation!” And what infinitely transcendeth all, Thou, the **GOD** of Angels, hast condescended to take upon Thee

“ the form of a servant” to man, and hast promised to give thyself to him.

8. What returns can I make to thee, O GOD, for these innumerable blessings? O that I were able to serve Thee all the days of my life! O that I were able to serve Thee truly, were it but for one day! Thou art truly worthy of all service, all honour, and all praise! Thou art my gracious LORD; and I am thy poor servant, who with his whole strength striveth to serve Thee, and who never wearies in thy praise. To do this, is the sole wish and desire of my heart; and whatsoever is wanting in me to fulfil it, do Thou in mercy supply it.

9. Great is the honour, great is the glory, to be devoted to thy service; and to despise every thing on account of thee. What large measures of Grace shall be poured upon those, who voluntarily subject themselves to thy service! What sweet consolations shall they receive from the Holy Spirit, who, for the love of Thee, renounce the delights of the flesh! What divine freedom of mind shall they enjoy, who, for the glory of Thy Name, leave “ the broad way” of the world “ that leadeth to destruction,” and, entering in at “ the strait gate,” persevere in “ the narrow way that leadeth unto Life!”

10. O grateful and pleasant service, that maketh man truly free and holy! O blessed state, that numbereth him with the family of Hea-

ven, maketh him equal to the Angels, accepted by GOD, terrible to evil spirits, and commendable to all the faithful! O service for ever to be desired and embraced!—in which alone we can recover the Divine Life we have lost, and enjoy the Supreme and Everlasting Good!

CHAPTER IX.

That the Desires of the Heart are to be examined and moderated.

 Y Son, there are many things for thee yet to learn, in which thou art not yet sufficiently instructed.” “LORD, “shew me what they are.” “Thy desires must be wholly referred to me; and instead of loving thyself, thou must love only my will. When Ephes. i. 9. desire burns in thy heart, and vehemently impels thee, consider, whether it is kindled on account of my honour, or of thy own personal advantage? If I am the pure source of it, thou mayest be well content therewith, and with whatsoever I shall ordain: but if it be *self-seeking* only, this will produce obstruction and distress.

2. Beware, therefore, of trusting to the fervour of any new desire, before thou hast consulted me; lest thou disapprove and repent of

that as *evil* which thou hast previously admitted and ardently indulged as *good*. Not every affection, which seems good, is to be immediately followed; nor must every one, because it has not that appearance, be immediately suppressed. Even those desires and pursuits that are known to be good, it is often expedient to moderate and restrain; lest by their importunity, thou incur distraction of mind; or, by apparent irregularity, give offence to others; or, by the opposition of others thou suddenly become impatient, and relapse.

3. But it is sometimes necessary to use violence, and stoutly oppose the sensual appetite; Gal. v. 16, 17. to regard not what the flesh likes or dislikes; but to labour to bring it, however reluctantly, Rom. vi. 13; under subjection to the spirit. And it must be viii. 12, 13. Gal. ix. 27. thus chastised, and compelled to absolute obedience, till it be ready to obey in all things; till it has learned to be content with little; to be delighted with simple things, and not to murmur at the greatest inconvenience.

CHAPTER X.

*The Way of Patience, and to fight against
Fleshly Desires.*



LORD my GOD, from thy instructions, and my own experience, I learn Luke xxi. 19. the absolute necessity of patience: for Heb. x. 36. this fallen state is full of adversity; and whatever care I take to secure peace, my present life is a continual trouble and warfare. “It is even Job vii. 1. so, my Son; yet I will not have thee seek after that peace which is free from temptation and trouble; but, contrariwise, think thou hast found peace, when it is derived from the exercise of much tribulation, and the trial of many sufferings. If thou sayest thou art not able to suffer much *here*, how wilt thou be able to endure the fire of *hereafter*? Of two evils, the least is to be chosen; and to escape the punishments of futurity, thou must, for the sake of GOD, bear with patience the evils of the present life.

2. Thinkest thou, that the men of this world suffer little or nothing? Thou wilt not find it thus, though thou searchest among the most prosperous and luxurious. But thou wilt say, that, in the indulgence of their own will, and

in the enjoyment of constant delight, their hearts are insensible to sorrow. Be it so: let them have whatsoever their souls delight in. How long dost thou think all this will last? Behold, those, abounding in this world's goods, shall vanish like the smoke, and there shall be no remembrance of past happiness. Even while they live, the enjoyment of them is attended with bitterness, wearisomeness, and fear; and that, from which they expected pleasure, becomes the source of pain and sorrow. And deservedly: for they, which beyond reason follow vain delights, even reason would that they should not have them without pain and grief.

3. O how transient and false, how impure and disgraceful, are all these pleasures! And yet, wretched man, from ebriety and blindness, is insensible of the poison he imbibes; and for the momentary delights of a corruptible life, incurs the danger of eternal death!

Ps. lxix. 11,

&c.

Eccl. xviii.

30, &c.

Ps. xxxvii. 4.

4. Do thou, therefore, my Son, restrain the appetites of the flesh, and turn away from thy own will. “Delight thyself in the **LORD**, and “he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” If thou wouldest truly delight in me, and be plentifully enriched with the joys of my Spirit, know, that such blessedness depends upon the contempt of the world, and the renunciation of its sordid pleasures; and the more thou abandonest the desire of creature-comfort, the more

wilt thou find sweeter and more powerful consolations in Myself.

5. But thou canst not attain to these without some sorrow, and inward conflict. Inveterate evil habits will produce an opposition, which can only be overcome by habits of holiness: the flesh will murmur and rebel; but it will be checked and subdued by the increasing fervour of the spirit. The old serpent will urge and Rev. xii. 9. exasperate thee, but he shall be put to flight by prayer; and his future approaches must be Matt. xxvi. ^{41.} opposed by some holy exercise, or some innocent and useful labour.

CHAPTER XI.

Of Meek Obedience, after the Example of JESUS CHRIST.

 Y Son, he that withdraws himself from obedience, withdraws himself from Grace; and he that seeketh private, foregoeth public, things. He that doth not freely and voluntarily submit to his Superior, demonstrates that the flesh is not yet overcome, but frequently murmurs and rebels. If thou desirest to subdue thy own flesh, learn ready submission to thy superiors: for that outward enemy will be much sooner overcome, if the

inner man be not suffered to waste itself in dissipation and indulgence. There is not a more violent or more dangerous enemy, than thyself to thyself—thy fleshly nature—when in hostility to the spirit. Thou must therefore assume a thorough contempt of thyself, if thou wouldest prevail against flesh and blood.

2. It is the inordinate love thou still indulgest for thyself, that makes thee tremble to resign thyself to the will of others. But is it a great thing for thee, who art dust and nothing, to submit to man, for the love of GOD—when I, the Omnipotent and Almighty, who created all things from nothing, submitted to man for the love of THEE? I became the least and lowest of all, that human pride might be subdued by my humility. Learn, therefore to obey, O dust! Learn to humble thyself, thou that art but earth and clay—and to bow down beneath the feet of all men! Learn to break the perverse inclinations of thy will, and to yield to all demands of obedience.

3. With holy indignation against thyself, repress the swellings of pride; and exhibit thyself so small, and so submissive, that men may walk over thee, and tread upon thee as mire in the streets. What hast thou to complain of, who art vanity itself? What, O base sinner, canst thou answer to those who reproach thee?—thou, who hast so often offended GOD, and incurred

Eccl. x. 12.
Col. i. 16, &c.
Matt. xx. 28.

his avenging wrath? But, because thy life was precious in my sight, my eye hath spared thee; that thou “mayest know my love, which passeth Ephes. iii. 9. “knowledge;” and in a perpetual sense of my mercy, and thy own unworthiness, devote thyself to unfeigned humility and cheerful submission, and patiently bear thy own contempt.

CHAPTER XII.

*The Secret Judgments of GOD to be considered;
that we wax not proud in Prosperity.*

 LORD, Thou breakest thy judgments Job xxxvii. in thunder over me, and my bones are 1-5. shaken with fear and trembling, and my soul is filled with unutterable dread. I Job xv. 15. stand astonished, when I consider that the heavens are not clean in thy sight. If thou hast Job. iv. 18, found impurity in angels, and hast not spared 19. even *them*, what will become of me? The Rev. vi. 13. stars have “fallen from heaven;” yea, “Lucifer, son of the morning,” hath not kept his place; and I, that am but dust, dare to presume upon my own stability? Many, whose works have appeared to be praiseworthy, have been degraded to the lowest infamy; and those who have fed upon the bread of angels, I have seen delighted with the husks of swine.

4. There is, therefore, no holiness, if Thou, LORD, withdraw thy presence. No wisdom profiteth, if thy spirit cease to direct ; no strength availeth, without thy support ; no charity is safe, without thy protection ; no watchfulness effectual, when thy holy vigilance is not our guard. Left to ourselves, we sink and perish ; but, do

Luke viii. 24. thou visit us—we walk upon the sea and live ! Unstable by nature, we stand firm by thy aid ; as, naturally lukewarm, by Thee we become animated and zealous.

5. O how abjectly and meanly ought I to think of myself ! How worthless and vain should I deem the good that appeareth to be mine ! With what profound humility, O LORD, ought I to cast myself into the abyss of thy judgments, where I continually find myself to be nothing and nothing ! O weight without measure ! O fathomless and impassable ocean, where all that I find of myself is, verily, nothing ! Where, now, is the lurking place of human glory ? Where the confidence of human

Ps. xxxvi. 5.

Ps. cxix. 120. virtue ? In the awful deep of thy Judgments,

which cover me, all vain glory is absorbed !

1 Cor. i. 29.

If. xlvi. 9.

6. LORD, what is all flesh in thy sight ? Shall the clay glory against Him that formed it ? Can that heart be elated by vain applause, that has thoroughly felt submission to the will of GOD ? The whole world doth not exalt *him*, whom truth hath subjected to himself ; nor can the

united praise of every tongue move him, whose hope is established in GOD. For those that utter praise, behold they also are nothing ; they shall pass away like the sound of their own words ; but “ the Truth of the Lord endureth for ever.” *Pf. cxvii. 2.*

CHAPTER XIII.

*How we must comport Ourselves in the Desires
that we entertain.*



ET this, my son, be the language of all thy requests : “ **LORD**, if it pleaseth James iv. 15. thee, grant that this may be accomplished. **LORD**, if this tend to thy honour, “ let it be done in thy name. **LORD**, if Thou “ feest that this is expedient for me, or approvest “ it to be useful, then grant it to me, and grace “ to use it to thy honour : but if Thou knowest “ it will prove hurtful, and conduce not to my “ soul’s welfare, remove from me such a desire.” For every desire that appeareth to man right and good, is not born of the Spirit ; and it is difficult to determine truly, whether the desire be prompted by the good spirit of God, or the evil spirit of the enemy, or thy own selfish spirit ; so that many have in the end been deceived, who thought they were at first under the influence of **THE SPIRIT** of GOD.

2. Whatever, therefore, presents itself as desirable to the mind, let it be desired and asked in the fear of God, and in humility of heart ; but especially with a resignation of thy own will, refer both the desire itself and the accomplishment of it to ME ; and say, “ LORD, Thou “ knowest what is best ; let this or that be done,

Mark xiv. 36. “ according to thy will. Give me what Thou “ wilt ; and in what measure, and at what time, “ Thou wilt. Do with me as thou knowest to “ be best, and what will most please Thee, and “ tend most to thy honour. Place me where “ Thou wilt, and freely dispose of me in all “ things. I am in thy hands ; lead me and turn “ me whithersoever thou wilt. I am thy servant, “ prepared for every reverse. Behold, I desire “ not to live to myself, but to Thee ; and grant “ that it may be truly and worthily ! ”

Ps. xxxi. 5

A Prayer for the Accomplishment of God's Good Pleasure.

3. Send me thy Grace, most merciful JESUS,

Wisd. ix. 10. that it may be “ present with me, and labour

Ephes. ii. 13. “ with me,” and preserve me unto the end. Enable me always to will and desire that which is most dear and acceptable to Thee. Let thy will be mine : and let my will always follow thine, and always be conformable to it. Let thy pleasure and displeasure be mine : nor let it be possible for me to be willing or unwilling, unless thou art so also.

4. Enable me to die to the cares and pleasures Gal. vi. 14. of this world; and, for thy sake, to love obscurity, and to bear contempt. But, transcending all I can desire, grant that I may rest in thee, and in thy peace possess my soul! Thou art its true peace: thou art its only rest; for without thee, all is darkness and disquietude. In this peace, O LORD, even in Thee, the Supreme and Everlasting Good, I will "sleep and take Psalm iv. 8. "my rest." Amen.

CHAPTER XIV.

That true Comfort is to be found only in GOD.

 HATEVER I can desire, or conceive essential to my comfort, cannot be the production of this world, and I look for it therefore in the world to come. If all the comforts of life were within my reach, and I could enjoy all its delights, most true it is, that I could not enjoy them long. Thy full Job xv. 22. consolation and perfect delight, therefore, O my 2 Cor. vii. 6. soul, are to be found only in GOD, the com- James iv. 6. forter of the poor, and the exalter of the humble. Wait a little while, O my soul, wait the accomplishment of the divine promise, and thou shalt enjoy the plenitude of good in heaven. By too inordinate a pursuit of earthly good, thou

loest that which is celestial and infinite. Use temporal things: desire those which are eternal.

2. It is impossible to be thoroughly satisfied with temporal good, because thou wert not created for its enjoyment; and, although thou wert in possession of all created worldly comfort, thou wouldest not be happy and blest; for it is in the Creator, the Supreme GOD alone, that all happiness and blessedness consist. Not such as is extolled and sought after by the foolish lovers of the world, but such as the faithful Christian admires and sighs for; such as the spiritual and pure in heart, whose “conversation “ is in heaven,” have sometimes a foretaste of.

Matt. v. 8. Phil. iii. 20. Job vi. 10. Psalm ciii. 9.

3. How vain and short-lived is all human comfort! How substantial and permanent, that which is derived from the Spirit of Truth! The regenerate man continually turneth to JESUS, the Comforter within him, and faith, “ be present “ with me, LORD JESUS! in all places, and at “ all times. May I find consolation, in being “ willing to bear the want of all human com- “ fort. And if thy consolation also be with- “ drawn, let thy will and righteous probation “ of me, be to me as the highest comfort: for “ Thou wilt not always chide, neither wilt Thou “ keep thine anger for ever!”

CHAPTER XV.

All our Cares must be cast upon GOD.

ON, suffer me to dispose of thee according to my will. I best know what is for thy profit. Thy thoughts are the thoughts of man; and in many things thou thinkest as thy partial affections impel thee.

2. LORD, thou speakest truth. Thy care of me is greater than all the care I can have for myself. His dependence is utterly vain, who casteth not all his care upon Thee. LORD, whilst my will remains right and firm towards thee, do with me whatsoever thou pleasest; for whatsoever is done by thee, cannot but be good. If Thou wishest me to be in darkness, blessed be thy name! If Thou wishest me to be in the light, again be thy name blessed! If thou deignest to comfort me, blessed be thy name! And if thou wishest me to be disturbed, let thy name be always equally blessed.

3. Such, my Son, must be the prevailing temper of thy spirit, if thou desirest to walk with me. Thou must be as ready to suffer, as to rejoice; as willing to be poor and needy, as to be full and rich. LORD, I will freely suffer for thy sake, whatever affliction Thou permittest

James iv. 7.

1 Pet. v. 7.

Pl. xci. 5. &c.

to come upon me. I will indifferently receive sweet and bitter, joy and sorrow, good and evil, at thy hands ; and for all that befalleth me, I will cordially give thanks. Keep me only from sin, and I will fear neither death nor hell. Cast me not off for ever, nor blot my name out of the Book of Life, and no tribulation shall have power to hurt me.

CHAPTER XVI.

In Conformity with the Example of CHRIST, the Miseries of this Fallen Life are to be borne with Patience and Resignation.

John iii. 13.
John vi. 33.
Isaiah liii. 5.



Luke ix. 58.

Matt. xii. 24.

CAME down from heaven, my Son, for thy salvation ; and took upon me the miseries of thy sinful nature, not from constraint, but love ; that thou mightest learn patience, and bear without murmuring the evils of thy fallen state. From the hour of my birth in the flesh, to the hour of my expiration on the cross, I found no intermission of sorrow. I felt the extreme want of the necessaries of life. I heard the continual murmurings of the world against me, and bore with meekness its reproach and scorn : my benefits were treated with ingratitude, my miracles with blasphemy, and my doctrine with reprehension.

2. O L ORD ! since Thou, by a life of patience, hast fulfilled thy Father's will, it is meet that I, a most wretched sinner, should patiently fulfil thy will ; and bear the evils of my fallen state, since it is thy wish, for the salvation of my soul.

3. For, although the present life seem a burthen, yet, through the power of thy grace, that burthen is rendered lighter, and through the influence of thy Holy Example, and of the Saints who have followed thy steps, it is made supportable and comfortable even to the weak. But much more consolatory it is, than it was experienced under the old law, when the gate of heaven remained shut, and the way to it was obscured with shadows, and so few desired to seek after the Kingdom of God. Nor could even those, who were just, and whom Thou hadst chosen to salvation, enter therein, till, by thy passion and bitter death, "a new and living way was consecrated" for them.

Heb. xi. 33,
40.

4. O, what thanks am I bound to render Thee, who hast thus deigned to open to me, and to every faithful soul, a good and sure way to thy eternal kingdom ! Thy Life, O L ORD ! is our way ; and in the exercise of holy patience we approach Thee, who art our righteousness and crown of glory. If thou hadst not preceded and taught us, who would have cared to follow ? Alas ! how many would have remained long and far behind, had they not beheld thy splendid ex-

1 Cor. ii. 11.
Hebr. x. 20.

ample! And yet, we are still lukewarm, in spite of all the signs we have seen, and all the doctrine we have heard. What, great God! would be our lot, had we not THY LIGHT to pursue and to illumine?

CHAPTER XVII.

Of the Bearing of Injuries, and who is the truly Patient Man.



HAT sayest thou, my son? In the contemplation of my passion, and of the sufferings of my Saints, cease to complain. “Thou hast not yet resisted unto blood.” Trifling are thy labours, compared with those who have been so powerfully tempted, so grievously afflicted, so variously tried and exercised.

Heb. xii. 4.

Heb. xi. 33, &c.

In the remembrance of their’s, which were so heavy, thou shouldest bear thy own, which are so light. And if thou thinkest thy own sufferings not light, it is owing to thy impatience and self-love: but whether they are light or heavy, bear them with unqualified submission.

2. The more truly thou disposest thyself to suffer, the more wisely dost thou act, and the greater will be thy recompence: whilst, by fortitude and habitual suffering, the severest evils are comparatively easily borne. Say not, “I cannot

“ brook this injury from such a man ; nor can
“ I put up with an affront of this nature, for he
“ has done me a serious wrong, and reproached
“ me for evil that never entered my thoughts.
“ From any *other* person I could have readily
“ borne it ; and would suffer as much as I think
“ I ought to suffer.” This is foolish reasoning ;
founded only on the nature of the offence, and
the relation of the person committing it ; but
it regards not the virtue of Patience, nor by
whom that Patience will be finally crowned.

3. He is not truly patient, who will suffer
only a certain degree of evil, and *that* only from
particular persons. The truly patient man con-
siders not by whom his trials come—whether
by his superior, his equal, or his inferior ; whe-
ther by the good and holy, or by the impious
and the wicked ; but, whatever adversity befall
him, however often it be renewed, or by whomso-
ever administered, he receives all with thankful-
ness, as from the hand of God, and esteems it
“ great gain :” for there is no suffering, be it
ever so small, that is patiently endured for the
sake of God, which will not be attended with
a due recompence.

3. Be therefore prepared for battle, if thou
desirest to obtain victory. The crown of pa-
tience cannot be received where there has been
no suffering. If thou refusest to suffer, thou re-
fusest to be crowned : but if thou wishest to be

Matt. v. 11,

^{12.}
Rom. viii. 18.

² Tim. ii. 5. crowned, thou must fight manfully, and suffer patiently. Without labour none can obtain rest; and without battle, there can be no victory.

Luke xviii. 27. 4. O LORD! make that possible to me by Grace, which I find to be impossible by Nature.

Thou knowest, that I can bear but little, and by the slightest adversity am soon overwhelmed. Grant that every exercise of tribulation may become lovely and desirable to me, for thy name's sake! To suffer and be afflicted for Thee, is most salutary to the health of my soul.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Confession of Man's Weakness, and of the Miseries of this Life.

Ps. xxxii. 5.



WILL confess my transgressions," and acknowledge my infirmity to Thee. O Lord, it is a small matter which often casts me down and depresses me. I resolve to act with fortitude, but the slightest temptation throws me into affliction. From the most unworthy cause, the most grievous temptations arise; and while I think myself safe, when I do not feel them, the smallest blast hath sometimes power to lay me prostrate.

Ps. lxix. 14, &c.

2. Behold therefore, O LORD, my abject state; and pity the infirmity which Thou knowest in-

finitely better than myself. Have mercy upon me, that I sink not: that the deep may not swallow me up for ever! So apt am I to fall, and so irresolute in the resistance of my passions, that I am continually beaten backwards, and covered with confusion in thy sight: and, although sin does not obtain my consent, yet the assaults of it are so frequent, and so violent, that I am even weary of living in daily conflict. Hence, my weakness is but too well known to me; for evil thoughts rush in upon me more easily than they are driven out again.

3. O, that Thou, most mighty GOD of Israel, the lover of faithful souls, wouldest look down with compassion on the labour and sorrow of thy servant, that thou wouldest assist him in all things, and hasten his re-union with Thee. Strengthen me with heavenly fortitude, lest the *Josh. i. 9.*
OLD MAN (this miserable flesh not yet being brought under subjection to the Spirit) should prevail and triumph over me. Against *HIM* I am bound to struggle, as long as I breathe in this fallen life.

4. Alas! what is this life, where tribulations and miseries do not prevail?—where snares and enemies do not on all sides abound! where, while one tribulation is departing, another com- *Job v. 7.*
eth on; and the first conflict has scarcely sub- *Job x. 17.*
sided, when many others, unlooked for, succeed! And can a life like this, thus embittered with

distress, thus subjected to calamities and miseries, be the object of desire? Can it even deserve the name of life, thus teeming with plagues and pains of death? Yet it is still loved, still desired; and many seek their only happiness in its enjoyments.

5. The world, indeed, is frequently reproached for its deceitfulness and vanity; but while carnal affections govern the heart, it is not easily forsaken. Some things lead us to love, and

¹ John ii. 16. some to despise it. “The lust of the flesh, and “the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,” which are of the world, lead us to love it; but as these bring forth pain and misery, they bring forth also, with them, disgust and hatred of the world. But, shame upon it! a depraved affection, secretly devoted to the world, and fancying that delights may yet be gathered from its

^{Pl. xxxiv. 8.} thorns, too often prevails and conquers. The sweetness of communion with GOD, and the internal comfort of virtue, is neither perceived nor enjoyed in such a state.

6. Those only, who thoroughly despise the world, and only strive to live under holy discipline to GOD, those only know the divine sweetness of his Grace—promised to all true

^{Luke ix. 23.} forsakers of themselves: such clearly perceive

^{John xvi. 33.} the grievous errors, and the various fallacies, of the world around them.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Soul must rest in GOD, above all Gifts, and all Good Things.



BOVE all things, and in all seasons, circumstances, and situations, trust in the LORD, O my soul, for he is the everlasting rest of the Godly.

Ps. iii. 3. 5;
xl. 4, &c.

2. Grant me, O most sweet, and most loving JESUS, to rest in Thee above all created beings; above all health and beauty; all glory and honour; all power and dignity; all science and subtlety; all riches and arts; above all joy and exultation; all fame and applause; all delight and consolation; all hope and promise; all gifts and graces which Thou Thyself canst bestow; all rapture and transport which the mind is able to comprehend; lastly, above Angels and Archangels, and all the host of heaven; above all that is visible and invisible; and above every thing, which Thou, my GOD, art not!

3. For Thou, O LORD my GOD, art above all, in all perfection! Thou alone art most high, most powerful, most sufficient, and most full! Thou alone art most sweet and most comforting! Thou alone art fair, and most loving; most noble, and most glorious above every thing:

Ps. xxxvi. 5;
xl. 1, &c.

in whom all good centres, from eternity to eternity ! And, therefore, whatsoever thou bestowest on me, that is not Thyself—whatsoever thou revealest or promisest, while I am not permitted fully to behold and enjoy Thee—is small and insufficient to fill the desires of my soul. My heart indeed cannot be thoroughly at rest, nor be wholly satisfied but in THEE—transcending all gifts, and all created beings !

Ps. lv. 6. 4. O, well-beloved spouse of my soul, JESUS CHRIST, source of purest love, and Lord of universal nature ! Who shall give me the wings of true liberty, that I may fly away, and be at rest with thee ? O, when will it be fully granted me, Ps. xxxiv. 8. to “ taste and see how good ” thou art, O LORD, my GOD ! When shall I be wholly absorbed in thy fulness !—that I may lose all consciousness of myself, and have no sense of any thing, or of any being, but Thine !

5. Now I groan continually, and bear with pain the burthen of my wretchedness : for many evils spring up in this vale of miseries which too frequently darken, deceive, and distress my soul : too frequently hinder, distract, allure, and entangle me ; so that I can have no free access to thee, nor enjoy that communion with thee, which is the privilege of beatified spirits. O let my sighs move thee, and the multiplied desolation which I suffer in this world !

Heb. i. 3.

6. O JESUS, the brightness of eternal glory,

sole comfort of the wandering soul, my heart is lifted up to Thee, and without voice speaketh to Thee. How long will my **LORD** delay his coming? O may he come to me, his forlorn creature, and turn my sorrow into joy! May he reach forth his hand, and snatch me from all misery and oppression! “Come, **LORD JESUS**, Rev. xxii. 20. “come quickly!” In thy absence, no day, nor hour is joyful: for Thou art my only joy; and without Thee my mind is void! I am wretched, and, as it were, incarcerated and bound with heavy chains—till thou revivest me with thy presence, restorest me to liberty, and liftest up the light of thy friendly countenance upon me. Pf. iv. 6, 7.

7. Let others seek of Thee some gratification or other: to me nothing is pleasing, or will please, but Thou alone, my **GOD**, my **Hope**, my everlasting **Salvation**! Nor will I cease from prayer and my importunity, till thy grace is returned to me again, and I hear thy blessed voice speaking within me.

8. Behold, I am here! Behold, I am come If. lviii. 9. to Thee, because thou hast called upon me. Thy tears, and the desire of thy soul, thy humility, and contrition of heart, have inclined me and brought me unto thee.

9. Then I said, **LORD**, I have called upon Thee, and desired truly to enjoy Thee; being prepared to renounce all things for thy sake. It is Thou who hast stirred up within me the

desire to seek Thee. Ever blessed, therefore, be thy name, O LORD! who, according to the multitude of thy mercies, hast shewn this kindness to thy servant.

10. What hath thy servant to say more in thy presence?—but to beg that he may humble himself exceedingly before Thee, and be ever mindful of his own darkness and vileness. There is none like unto Thee in all the wonders of heaven and earth; thy works are greatly good; thy judgments are true; and thy providence governeth the whole universe. Wherefore, praise and glory be unto Thee, O wisdom of the Father, for ever! “Bless the LORD, all his works, “in all places of his dominion; bless the LORD, “O my soul!”

Pf. xxxv. 10.
Pf. lxxi. 19.
Pf. lxxvi. 8.

Pf. x. 5.
Pf. xxxvi. 6.

Pf. ciii. 2. 22.

CHAPTER XX.

*Of the thankful Remembrance of the manifold
Mercies of GOD.*

Pf. cix. 18.
Ezek. xx. 19.



PEN my heart, O LORD, in thy law, and teach me to walk in thy commandments. Give me understanding to know thy will; and to remember, with faithful recollection, and profound reverence, thy innumerable benefits, as well general as particular; that I may hence be always able to praise Thee,

and give Thee thanks. I know indeed, and confess, that of myself I am not able to render Thee due thanks and praise for thy smallest benefits; for I am less than the least of all thy Gen. xxxii. 10. mercies; and when I attempt to contemplate thy excellent majesty, my spirit fails, unable to Pf. xl. 5. sustain the vast idea.

2. All the faculties of mind and body, all the endowments of nature, and all the advantages of grace, are the gifts of thy hand, and proclaim the infinite love and munificence of the giver, ^{1 Cor. xii. 8, &c.} from whom all good proceedeth: and though one receiveth more, and another less, yet it is all thine; and without Thee, the least portion cannot be enjoyed. He that hath received greater gifts, hath no reason to glory in his own ^{1 Cor. iv. 6, 7.} merit; nor to exalt himself above others; nor to insult his poorer brother who hath received less: for *he* is the greater and better man, who ascribes least to himself, and is more devout and humble in the seeking after the praise of **HIM**, from whom every good and perfect gift proceeds. And he who esteems himself the vilest, and the most unworthy of receiving favours, is the better fitted for greater attainments.

3. But he that hath received fewer things, ought not therefore to be troubled, nor to bear it indignantly, nor to envy his wealthier neighbour; but rather to wait thy will, O GOD, and to extol that goodness, which is so abundantly,

Rom. ii. 11. so freely and voluntarily, and without respect of persons, dispensed to all. All things flow from Thee; and by all things, and in all things, art thou to be praised. Thou knowest what is fit to be given, and what to be withheld; and why one hath more, and another less, it is not in us, but in Thee only to discern, who hast weighed the merits of all creatures in thy righteous balance.

Pf. cxiii. 7. 4. Therefore, O LORD GOD, I esteem it a signal mercy, that I do not possess many of those things, which, in the eyes of men, appear glorious, and gain applause: and he that truly considers his own personal poverty and meanness, so far from being disquieted, grieved, and dejected, should rather derive comfort and great cheerfulness; for Thou, O GOD, hast chosen the poor in spirit, the humble, and the despised of the world, for thy friends, and the children of thy family. Of this, thy own Apostles are witnesses, whom Thou hast appointed “princes in “all the earth.” Yet these passed a life of indignity without complaint; and were so humble, so meek, so free from “all malice and guile,” that they even rejoiced to “suffer shame” and reproach “for thy name;” and what the world abhorred, they, with undiminished affection embraced.

James ii. 5. Pf. xlvi. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 1. Acts v. 41.

5. Nothing, therefore, should give so much joy to the heart of him that truly loveth Thee,

and is truly sensible of thy mercies, as the perfect accomplishment of thy will, not only in his temporal, but in his eternal, state : in which he should feel so much complacency and content, that he may be abased as willingly as others are exalted ; that he may be as peaceful and contented in the lowest place, as others are in the highest ; and as gladly accept of a state of weakness and meanness, destitute alike of ability and reputation, as others do of a state of the most splendid honours and worldly power. The accomplishment of thy will, and the love of thy honour, should transcend all other considerations ; and produce more consolation and peace, than all the benefits which have been, or can possibly be, conferred.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of Four Steps that lead to Liberty and Peace.



WILL now teach thee, my son, the way to true liberty and peace.” Gracious LORD ! do what thou sayest : for it is most grateful for me to hear.

Christ speaketh. Study to do the will of another, rather than thy own.

Always prefer a humble state, to one of affluence.

Always chuse the lowest place, and be in sub-mission to all.

Always wish and pray that the will of God may be perfectly accomplished in thee.

Behold, he that doeth this, enters into the region of peace and rest.

2. **LORD!** this short lesson teacheth great perfection ; it is expressed in few words, but it is replete with truth and fruitfulness ; and if I could faithfully observe it, trouble would not so easily rise up within me. For as often as I find myself disquieted and oppressed, I find that I have wandered from this, thy doctrine. But do thou, **O LORD!** who canst do all things, and evermore lovest the improvement of the soul, increase the power of thy grace ; that I may be enabled to fulfil thy word, and to accomplish my own salvation.

A Prayer against Evil Thoughts.

Pf. xxii. 1,

^{19.} Pf. xxxviii.

22.

3. “**O LORD,** my **GOD,** be not far from “**me :** **O my GOD,** make haste for my help !” for a multitude of evil thoughts have risen up within me, and terrible fears afflicting my soul. How shall I pass them unhurt ? How shall I break my way through them ?

If. xlv. 1, 3.

4. I will go before thee (faith **CHRIST,**) and humble the glorious of this world, who hold dominion over thee. I will break thy prison-doors, and reveal to thee all secrets and mysteries.

5. Do, O LORD, as thou hast spoken ; and at “the light of thy countenance” all evil thoughts shall vanish away. This is my hope and only consolation, strength and comfort, to fly to Thee in every tribulation ; to confide in Thee ; to call upon Thee from the depths of my heart, and patiently to wait for thy consolation.

A Prayer for Mental Illumination.

6. Illuminate me, most merciful JESUS ! with the splendour of thy presence, and cast out all darkness from the secret dwelling of my heart. Restrain my wandering thoughts, and repulse the temptations that assault my soul. Fight thou my battles ; and expel my worst enemies—those deceitful lusts and passions—that, in thy power, I may have peace, and my purified soul, as a living temple consecrated to Thee, may resound with songs of thankfulness and praise ! Rebuke the winds and the storms : say to the sea, “ Be “ still ; ” and to the north-wind, “ blow thou Matt. viii. 26. “ not ; ” and there shall be “ a great calm.”

7. Send forth thy light and thy truth, that they may shine upon this barren earth : for I am “ earth, without form, and void,” till Thou pour forth thy grace. Refresh my heart with the dew of Heaven, that may produce good and excellent fruit ; minister the waters of devotion to the irrigation of the face of the earth, that it raise my fallen soul, oppressed with the burthen

of sin; draw all my desire after Thee; that, tasting the sweetness of heavenly things, I may despise and forget the gratifications of earth. O, force me from myself! Snatch me from the delusive enjoyment of the creature, who is unable to comfort and appease me. Unite me to thyself, in the indissoluble bonds of love: for Thou alone canst satisfy the lover; and without Thee, all is “vanity and nothingness!”

CHAPTER XXII.

Of avoiding overmuch Curiosity into the Conduct of Others.



ON, indulge not vain curiosity, nor surrender thyself to unprofitable cares. “What is this,” or “that to thee?

John xxi. 22. “Follow thou me.” What is it indeed to thee, whether such an one be so, or so? Or whether he speak or act in this way or that? Thou wilt

Rom. xiv. 12. not be required to answer for others, but for thyself: why, then, dost thou perplex thyself with their conduct? Behold, I know all; and “have

Eccl. i. 14. “seen all the works that are under the sun.” I

John ii. 25. search the secrets of every heart, and know what it thinks, what it desires, and to what end its intention is directed. All things therefore are committed to me: do thou only study to preserve thy-

self in true peace, and leave the restless to be as restless as they will. They cannot deceive Om-niscience; and whatsoever they have done or said, it shall fall “ upon their own heads.”

2. “Weigh thou neither the shadow of a great name, nor the familiarity of many, nor the private affection of men; for these produce great Ephes. iv. 18. distractions and “blindness of heart:” I would freely visit thee with instruction, and reveal my secrets to thee, if thou didst faithfully watch my coming, and keep the door of thy heart open to Rev. iii. 20. receive me. Be wise; “watch and pray;” and humble thyself in all things.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

In what true Peace of Mind and true Spiritual Progress consist.

ON, I have said, “Peace I leave with John xiv. 27. you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.”

Peace is what all desire; but the things that belong to true peace, few regard. My peace dwells not but with the “meek and lowly in heart:” Luke xix. 42. thy peace will be found only in the exercise of much patience. If thou wilt hearken unto me, and obey my voice, thou mayest enjoy much peace.” LORD! what shall I do? “Keep a

“ strict guard over all thy words and actions ;
“ and let the bent of thy mind be to please me
only, and to desire and seek after no good but
me : and if, with this, thou refrainest from judg-
ing rashly the words and actions of other men,
and dost not perplex thyself with business that
doth not belong to thee, thou wilt little or rarely
feel trouble.”

2. Indeed, to be wholly exempt from trouble, and to suffer no distress either of mind or body, belongs not to the present time, but to a state of eternal tranquillity. Think not, therefore, that thou hast found true peace, when thou happenest to feel no anxiety ; or, that all is well, when thou meetest with no adversary ; or, that perfection is then attained, when all things correspond with thy own inclinations :—neither exalt thyself in thine own esteem, as specially beloved of Heaven, if thou shouldest feel the fervour and sweetness of devotion ; for by these marks the true lover of virtue is not known ; nor doth perfection, or man’s progress towards it, consist in such testimonies.

¹ Cor. xiii. 5.

3. “ In what then,” O Lord ? “ In offering
“ up thyself, with thy whole free heart, to the
“ will of God; in never seeking thy own will either
“ in small or in great respects ; either in time or
“ in eternity ; but, with an equal mind, weigh-
“ ing all things in an equal balance ; and receiv-
“ ing both prosperity and adversity with continual

“thankfulness. If thou wert so courageous, so
“patient and persevering, that, when deprived
“of spiritual comfort, thou couldest prepare thy
“heart for severer trials—not justifying thyself,
“and extolling thine own holiness as that which
“ought to have exempted thee from such suffer-
“ings—but justifying me in all my appointments
“—then, wouldest thou walk in the direct path
“to true peace, and without doubt shouldest see Job xxxiii. 26.
“my face again in joy. To accomplish this,
“there must be a thorough contempt and for-
“getfulness of SELF; and when that is established,
“know that thou wilt enjoy peace as fully as it
“can be enjoyed in this imperfect state.”

4. LORD! it is the business of a regenerate man never to relax in his desire after his first state in Thee; and, in the midst of cares, to pass on without solicitude; not from insensibility, but by a certain power of mental liberty, unencumbered by an inordinate affection of the creature. I beseech Thee, therefore, O my most merciful God, to preserve me from the cares of this life, that I may not be too much involved in them; from the numerous wants of the body, that I may not be ensnared by sensuality; and from all the obstacles of a spiritual life, that I may not be cast down by trouble and despair. I mention not those things only, which the vanity of this world pursues with so much desire, but, from those miseries which, as the consequence 1 John ii. 16.

of the penal sentence of mortality, do so encumber and depress the soul of thy servant, that she cannot enter into the liberty of the spirit as often as she willeth.

5. O my GOD, sweetness inexpressible! turn into bitterness all carnal consolation, which is drawing my mind from the love of eternity — and which, by the intuitive communication of some present good, is alluring me and binding me more fatally faster to herself. Let not flesh and blood, O my GOD, subdue me; let not the world, and its transient glory, deceive me; let not the devil, and his subtil reasoning, supplant me. Give me courage to resist; patience to suffer; and constancy to persevere. Give me, instead of all worldly comfort, the unction of thy HOLY SPIRIT; and, for all carnal love, pour

Gal. i. 16.

Gal. vi. 14.

into my heart the love of thy name.

6. Behold, the care of food and raiment, and other things, appertaining to the support of the body, are burthensome to a fervent spirit. Grant me to use all such things with moderation; not to be too much involved in them; nor anxiously to desire the possession of them, nor bitterly lament their want. To cast all away is not fit, for nature must be sustained: but to desire superfluity, and that which ministers to delight, more than to use, thy holy law forbids; lest the flesh should rebel against the spirit. In all these difficulties, let thy hand rule and direct me, that I may preserve the middle way.

Gal. v. 17.

CHAPTER XXIV.

That Self-love is the chief Obstruction to the Attainment of the Supreme Good.



Y son, thou must buy the whole with Matt. xix. 27,
29. the whole, and keep back nothing of thyself. Know that the love of SELF is more hurtful to the soul, than the united power of the world. According to thy love for *them*, every thing doth more or less adhere to *thee*. If thy love were pure, simple, and well regulated, to me, no creature would have power to enslave thee. Covet not that which thou art not permitted to enjoy ; retain not the possession of that which will obstruct thee, and rob thee of inward liberty. How wonderful is it, that from the depth of thy heart thou dost not resign thyself, and all thou canst desire and possess, to my Will !

2. Why dost thou pine away in vain sorrow ? and why is thy strength consumed by superfluous cares ? Establish thyself in resignation to my good pleasure, and thou shalt suffer no evil. But if, for thine own proper good, and the gratification of thine own will, thou desirest this thing or that, or wishest to be here or there, thou wilt always be tormented with anxiety,

and subjected to solicitude; for in all earthly good thou wilt find a mixture of evil, and in every place wilt meet with some opposing adversary.

3. It is not, therefore, the acquisition or the increase of external good, that will befriend thee, but rather the contempt of it; and the rooting the very desire of it out of thy heart:

¹ Cor. vii. 31. and this must not only be understood of wealth,
¹ John ii. 17. but of glory, and the enjoyment of empty honour and delusive praise, which pass away with the passing world. Nor can change of place much avail, if fervent spirit of devotion be wanting. Peace, sought for abroad, cannot be found if it be wanting in the heart; which, destitute of me, wants the very foundation upon which that peace can be established. Thou mayest change thy situation, but canst not mend it: the evils which thou hast fled from, will still be found, and more

Rom. vii. 8. may soon arise.

Psalm li. 12. 5. "Uphold me, O God! with thy free
 Ephes. iii. 16. "spirit." "Strengthen me with might in the
 "inner man!" that, being emptied of all selfish solicitude, I may no longer be the slave of tormenting desires; but may consider all earthly good, of whatever kind, as continually passing away, and my own fallen life is passing with it: for there is nothing permanent under the sun, where "all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

Eccl. 1. 14.

6. Give me, O Lord, thy heavenly wisdom,

that I may learn to know and seek Thee alone, and, thus seeking, find Thee ; that I may love Thee, and delight in Thee, above all beings ; and that, for other things, let me understand them as thy wisdom seemeth fit.

7. Grant that I may carefully shun flattery, and patiently bear contradiction ; that, neither moved by every blast of words, or every breath of flattery, I may securely *continue* the path of life which I have begun to tread.

Job vi. 26.
Eccl. v. 11.

CHAPTER XXV.

Against Calumniators.

 Y son, bear it not amiss, when men think Matt. v. 11.
evil of thee, and speak that which thou art loath to hear. Thy own opinion of thyself should be much lower than others can form, and thou shouldest consider no one more infirm than *thyself*. If thy attention were confined to the inner man, thou wouldest not much meditate upon flying words. In evil times, it is most wise to be silent ; and in full conversion of heart to me, not to be discomposed at the judgment of men.

2. Let not thy peace depend upon the word of fallible men ; for whether they be good or bad interpreters of thy conduct, they cannot

render thee a different creature. Where are true peace and true glory to be found, but in me? And he that, seeking them in me, loves not the praise of men, nor fears their blame, shall enjoy peace in abundance: for, from inordinate love, and vain dread, cometh all disquietude of heart, and all distraction of soul.

CHAPTER XXVI.

GOD is to be invoked and blessed in the Hour of Tribulation.



LESSED be thy name, O LORD, for ever, who hast permitted this temptation and tribulation to come upon me. I am not able to fly from it; but it is necessary for me to fly to Thee, that thou mayest support me, and make it instrumental to my good. O GOD, I am in deep distress, and my heart faints, and sinks under the burthen of its sorrows. And John xii. 27. now, dear Father, what shall I say?—"save me from this hour;"—But for this cause came I unto this hour, that after being perfectly humbled, thou mightest have the glory of my deliverance. "Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me!" Poor as I am, what can I do, and whither shall I go, without Thee? O fortify me under this new distress; be thou my strength and my sup-

port; and whatever be its weight, I will not fear.

2. And now, in the midst of all these troubles, what shall I say? “Thy will be done!” This tribulation and anguish I must bear, as my due. O that I may bear it with patience, till the storm be past, and light and peace succeed! Yet thy omnipotent arm, O God, can remove, as it hath done before, even this trial from me; or so mitigate its severity, that I sink not utterly under it. The more difficult it seemeth to me, the more easy to Thee is this change “of thy ^{Ps. lxxvii. 1,}
“right hand, O most High!” ^{&c.}

3. “Son, I am the **LORD**; a strong hold in ^{Nahum i. 7.} Nahum i. 7. “the day of trouble.” When trouble riseth up within thee, take sanctuary in me. The support of heavenly consolation comes flow, because thou art flow in the use of prayer; and before thou turnest to me, thou hast recourse to other comforts, seeking in vain relief from worldly objects. But thy own experience will convince thee that no profitable counsel, no effectual help, no lasting remedy, is to be found but in **ME**. When therefore I have calmed the violence of the tempest, rise with new strength and confidence in the light of my mercies; for I, the **LORD**, declare, that I will not only restore fallen nature from its first state, but with super-abundant communications of life, and light, and love.

^{Ps. i. 15.}
^{Ps. lxxxvi. 1,}
^{&c.}

4. Dost thou think that “there is any thing ^{Jerem. xxxii.}

“ too hard for me ? ” or that I am like to vain man, who promiseth and who performeth not ?

1 Cor. xv. 13.
Pſ. xxvii. 14.

Where is thy faith ? Stand firmly, and persevere ; possess thy soul in patience, and comfort will come to thee in its proper season. Wait for me ; and, if I come not, still wait ; for in the end I will come, and heal thee. It is temptation which afflicts, and vain fear which terrifies thee. What availeth thy solicitude about future contingencies, Matt. vi. 34. but the heaping of sorrow upon sorrow ? “ Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” It is unprofitable and vain, to be either dejected or elevated about future events which may never come to pass. Such disorders of imagination are, indeed, incidental to man : but it is an evidence of a weak mind to be so easily led away by every suggestion of the enemy. That enemy cares not whether it be by realities, or by fictions, that he tempts and betrays thee ; whether by the love of present good, or the fear of future evil, that he destroys thy soul.

John xiv. 1.

5. “ Let not,” therefore, “ thy heart be troubled,” neither let it be afraid. “ Believe in me,” and have confidence in my mercy. I am often near thee, when thou thinkest me at a great distance ; and when thou hast given up all as lost, then, oftentimes, a greater gain or reward breaketh in. All is not lost, when matters fall out contrary to thy expectation. Thou must not judge of thy future condition, by thy present

perceptions ; nor be overwhelmed in trouble, from whatever cause, as if it were thy state of existence, and as if all hope of emerging therefrom were utterly taken away.

6. Think not thyself, therefore, wholly deserted, when I permit tribulation to come upon thee for a season, or withhold any wished for consolation ; for this is the way to the kingdom of heaven. And this is doubtless more expedient for thee, and for the rest of servants, to be exercised in sufferings, than to enjoy all things without distinction or restraint. I, who know the hidden thoughts of thy heart, know that it is greatly expedient to thy salvation to be sometimes left without succour, lest, being puffed up with prosperity, thou thinkest thyself to be what in reality thou art not.

7. What I bestow, I can both take away and restore, as it shall seem good unto me. When I have bestowed it, it is still mine ; and when I take it away, I take not that which is thine ; for every given good, and every perfect gift, is mine. When, therefore, I visit thee with adversity, or contrariety, murmur not, neither let thy heart be troubled ; for I can speedily lift thee up again, and change thy heaviness into joy. I, the **LORD**, am righteous, and greatly to be praised, when I act thus towards thee.

8. If thou wert wise, and didst consider the truth, instead of grieving and murmuring at

1 Cor. iv. 7.
James i. 17.

Phil. iii. 8.
James i. 2.
John xv. 9.

Luke viii. 15.

these contrarieties and adversities, thou wouldest rather rejoice and give thanks : nay, thou wouldest “ count it all joy,” that I thus visit thee with affliction, and spare thee not. “ As the Father “ hath loved me, so I have loved you :”—said I once to my Disciples ; and I sent them forth into the world, not to temporal delights, but to great conflicts ; not to honours, but to contempt ; not to ease, but to labour ; not to take repose, but to “ bring forth much fruit with patience.” My son, remember my words !

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Creature to be neglected for the Creator.



MY GOD, I want yet a greater portion of grace to be able continually to turn to Thee, without adherence to the creature : which, while it retains the least possession of my heart, keeps me from flying to Thee. He truly desired this liberty, who said, “ O that I had wings like a dove, for then “ would I flee away and be at rest ! ” What can be more at rest, than the heart which in singleness and simplicity regardeth only Thee ? What more free, than the soul that hath no earthly desires ? To be able, therefore, with mental ecstasy, as it were, to contemplate thee, and to

Ps. lv. 6.

know that Thou transcendest the most perfect of thy works, it is necessary to rise above all created beings, and utterly to forsake oneself; for while I am “tied and bound with the chain” of earthly affections, I cannot freely partake of divine contemplations.

2. Few attain to this blessed and contemplative state, because few totally abandon that which is finite and perishing. For this, a high degree of grace is requisite, which will raise the soul and transport it above itself. And unless man, by this spiritual elevation be delivered from all adherence to the creature, and wholly united to GOD, whatever be his knowledge, and whatever his possession, they are of little value. He will long continue in an infantine state, grovelling upon earth, while he esteems any thing great but the one immense and eternal Good!—for whatever is not of GOD is nothing, and should be held as nothing. Great is the difference between the wisdom of an illuminated mind, devoted to me, and the wisdom of a merely literary and studious man. More noble is that learning which, connected with heaven, remains—than that which is laboriously acquired by the efforts of the human understanding.

3. Many are found desirous to attain to contemplation as an exalted state, who take no care to practise that abstraction which is necessary for the enjoyment of it. A great impediment

thereto is, that we make a stand in signs and things sensible, and care little for perfect mortification. I know not how the thing is, or with what spirit we are led, and what pretensions we bring forward, that, calling ourselves spiritual, we display labour and greater solicitude in vile and transitory things, rarely impressed with a recollection of the importance of self-examination and the perishableness of worldly matters.

4. Shame upon it!—after a flight recollection, we immediately rush into the world again, unacquainted with the nature and end of the actions which we have pretended to examine. We heed not where our affections lay; nor do we deplore how impure all things are, nor in what they terminate; but like those of old, Gen. vi. 12. “when all flesh had corrupted his way,” and thus an universal deluge followed. Our inward principle, therefore, being corrupt, it cannot but be, that our actions, the symptoms of the want of inward health and strength, be corrupt also; for it is only out of a pure heart, that the divine fruits of a pure life can be brought forth.

1 Tim. i. 5.

5. We busily enquire what such a man hath done, but we are not so particular to enquire from what *principle* he hath done it. We ask whether this or that man be valiant, rich, beautiful, or ingenious; whether he be a profound scholar, an elegant writer, or a fine singer; but

how sparing are our enquiries whether he be patient, meek, holy and resigned? Nature surveys the outward man, but grace looks closely into the inward. Nature, depending wholly upon itself, frequently errs. Grace trusts wholly in God, that it may never be deceived.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of Self-denial, and Renunciation of Animal Desire.

MY son, thou canst not attain unto perfect liberty without a total denial of thyself. All self-lovers and self-seekers, over covetous, and over curious, are bound in chains, always seeking their own ease, and not the interests of their Crucified SAVIOUR; but often pretending so to do, and erecting thereby a fabric of hypocrisy which cannot stand; for all that is not of GOD, shall perish.

Matt. xvi. 24.

James i. 14,

1 Tim. vi. 9.

2 Tim. iii. 2.

Rom. vi. 13.

Phil. ii. 21.

Follow invariably this short but perfect rule: “ Forsake all, and thou shalt possess all; relinquish desire, and thou shalt find rest.” Revolve this again and again in thy mind: and when thou hast fulfilled it thoroughly, thou shalt understand all things.

Matt. xvi. 25.

Luke ix. 24.

2. Lord, this is not the work of a day, nor an

exercise for children; for in this short precept is included all religious perfection.

3. My son, turn not aside, nor be immediately depressed, when thou hearest of the way of the perfect; but rather stir up thyself to higher things, and sigh after them at least with an earnest desire. O, that it were thus with thee, and that thou hadst arrived at this state, that self love were so far subdued, that, with pure submission, thou couldest obey my behests, and resign thyself to the disposals of my pro-

Levit. xxvi. 3.
&c.

Rev. iii. 18.

dience! Then, wouldest thou be greatly pleasing in my sight, and thy whole life would pass away in peace and joy. But thou hast still much to abandon, which, unless it be wholly surrendered up to me, thou shalt not obtain the rest which thou seekest after. “I counsel thee,” therefore, “to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich;” that is, that thou mayest possess heavenly wisdom, which trampleth all abject and vile things beneath. Renounce all earthly wisdom, and all complacency both in the world and in thyself.

4. I have told thee, that what is low and vile in human estimation, can be purchased only at the expense of what is exalted and precious: for most vile and contemptible among men, and most unworthy of thought and remembrance, seemeth to be heavenly wisdom; that wisdom,

Rom. xii. 16. which thinketh not highly of herself, nor seeketh

the applause of men; and which many “honor Matt. xv. 8.
“with their lips,” but in their lives renounce.
She however is “the pearl of great price,” hid- Matt. xiii. 46.
den from many.

CHAPTER XXIX.

*Of the Instability of the Heart; and of the final
Direction of the Intention to God alone.*

 Y son, trust not the ardour of present affection; for it will soon change to apathy. As long as thou livest, thou wilt, even against thy will, be subject to mutability; now joyful; and now sad; now peaceful, and now disturbed; now devout, and now undevout; to-day diligent, to-morrow idle; this hour serious, the next trifling. But he that hath true wisdom, and deep spiritual experience, stands far aloof from this changeable state: he regardeth not what he feels in himself, nor whence the wind of instability blows; but studies only that his mind may be directed to the proper and wished for end. And thus, in all the various events of this life, he remains unchanged and unmoved, by directing aright the Matt. vi. 22. eye of his intention, and fixing it solely upon me.

2. The more pure the eye of his intention, or the mind is, the more bravely he journeys

John xii. 9.

amongst contending storms. In many, this eye of the intention waxeth dim ; and is easily caught and conquered by some object of sensual gratification. Rarely, indeed, is any one found free from the blemish of self-seeking. Thus, the Jews formerly came to Bethany, to the house of Martha and Mary, not only to see JESUS, but also Lazarus, whom he had just raised from the dead. The eye of the intention, therefore, must be purified until it becomes simple and right, and, beyond all intermediate objects of pleasure, look solely unto me.

CHAPTER XXX.

The Soul which loves GOD, enjoys Him in all things, and above all things.

1 Cor. xv. 28.



EHOLD, thou art my God, and my All ! What can I wish for more ? What greater happiness can I possibly desire ? O sweet and savoury Word ! but to him only who loveth the Word ; “ not the world “ neither the things that are in the world.” My GOD, and my All ! Enough to say, for him that understandeth ; and often to say it, delightful to him that loveth.

1 John ii. 15.

2. Thou being present, all things are sweet : but absent, all things fail and displease. Thou

makest the heart tranquil, and givest great peace and festive joy. Thou makest us to think well of all things, and to praise Thee in all things. Without Thee, nothing can please long ; for to make them truly grateful, thy grace must be present, and they must be seasoned with the seasoning of thy own wisdom.

3 What bitterness becomes not sweet to him, that truly tasteth Thee ? To him, by whom thou art not relished, what sweetness will not be Rom. i. 22. bitter ? But the wise of this world, and those that delight in carnal enjoyments, are destitute of the wisdom which is from above. In the Rom. viii. 6. world are found only vanity and death. But they who, by the contempt of the world, and the mortification of the flesh, truly follow Thee, know that they are truly wise ; and find themselves translated from vanity to truth, from the flesh to the spirit. These alone enjoy God ; and whatever is found good in the creature, they refer to the praise of the Creator. Great however, infinitely great, is the difference between the enjoyment of the Creator, and of the creature ; of eternity, and of time ; of uncreated light, and of light communicated.

4. O eternal light ! — infinitely surpassing all created lights, let thy brightest beams descend upon my heart, and penetrate its inmost recesses. O purify, exhilarate, enliven, and enlighten, my spirit — that, with all its powers, it may adhere to

Thee in raptures of holy jubilee ! O, when will that blessed and desirable hour come, in which thou wilt satisfy me with thy presence, and be to me all in all ? Until this is granted me, my joy will not be full.

Rom. vi. 6. 5. Hitherto, I find the old man—O shame !—still living within me. He is not yet wholly crucified ; he is not yet perfectly dead. The flesh still strongly lusteth against the spirit :—still kindles internal war ; nor suffers the spiritual kingdom to be at peace. But do Thou, O

Pf. lxxxix. 9. GOD ! “ who controllest the power of the sea,

Pf. lxviii. 30. “ and stillest the raging of its waves,” arise, and help me ! Scatter Thou those “ that delight in “ war ! ” O break them in pieces with thy mighty power ! Shew forth, I beseech thee, the wonders of thy greatness, and let thy right hand be glorified :—for there is no other hope, nor refuge for me, but in Thee, O Lord, my God !

CHAPTER XXXI.

This Life is never free from Temptation.

Y son, as long as thou livest in this world, thou canst not live secure, but wilt always have need of spiritual armour. Thou art encompassed with enemies, who assault thee on the right hand and on the ^{2 Cor. vi. 7.} left; and if thou dost not defend thyself on every side with the shield of patience, thou canst not long escape some wound: moreover, if thy heart be not fixed upon me, with a determination of suffering all things for my sake, thou wilt never be able to sustain the conflict, nor obtain the palm of the victory of the blessed. Thou must, therefore, strenuously pass through the various dangers that surround thee; and use a strong hand against all opposition.

2. If thou seekest rest in this life, how wilt thou attain to the everlasting rest of the life to come? Thou must not merely rest, but prepare thy heart for far greater patience and resignation. True peace is to be found, not on earth, but in heaven; nor among men, nor created beings, but in GOD. For the love of GOD, therefore, ^{2 Thess. iii. 16.} thou must cheerfully and patiently endure all things: labour and sorrow, temptation, vexation ^{Rom. viii. 35,} ^{39.}

and anxiety, poverty and want, pain and sickness, detraction, reproof, humiliation, confusion, correction, and contempt. These help to virtue; these prove “the new man in Christ Jesus;” these obtain for him the celestial crown. For his short labour, I will give him eternal rest, and transient shame for his endless glory.

James i. 2.

3. Thinkest thou, that thou shalt always have spiritual consolations at thy option? My saints did not always possess them; but on the contrary, endured many labours, various temptations, and great desolations. Yet they sustained every thing patiently; confiding, not in themselves, but in God: for they knew, that, “the sufferings of the present time were not worthy to be compared with the glory that should be revealed in them.” And wouldest thou enter into the immediate possession of *that*, which these men, after so many tears, and such severe conflicts, scarcely attained? “Wait on the LORD; be of good courage; and he shall strengthen thy heart.” Distrust me not, neither depart from me; but constantly devote both soul and body to my service and my glory. I will abundantly reward. I will be with thee in every tribulation.

Rom. viii. 18.

Ps. xxvii. 14.

Ps. 1. 15.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Against the Vain Judgments of Man.

MY son, fix thy heart stedfastly upon the Psalm lv. 22. LORD ; and while thy own conscience bears testimony to thy purity and innocence, fear not the judgment of man. It is good and blessed thus to suffer : nor will suffering itself be grievous to the humble in heart, who confideth not in himself, but in God.

2. Many men say many and contrary things ; and are therefore entitled to little credit. It is impossible to please all : and though St. Paul endeavoured to please all men in the Lord, and was “ made all things to all ;” yet, with him, 1 Cor. x. 33 ; ix. 22. it was “ a very small thing to be judged of 1 Cor. iv. 3. “ man’s judgment.” This faithful servant laboured continually to promote the edification and salvation of men ; but their judgments and censures he was not able to restrain. He therefore committed his cause to God, who knoweth all things ; and sheltered himself against the “ slanderous and backbiting speeches of the un-“ godly,” the vain, and the false—and the more open reproaches of the licentious—under the guard of patience and humility. Yet he sometimes replied to his accusers ; lest, from his

silence, he might give occasion of scandal to the weak.

If. li. 12.
¹ Macc. ii. 63. 3. “Who,” then, “art thou, that thou
“shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and
“of the son of man who shall be made as grafts?”

Matt. vi. 30.
Prov. iii. 25. “which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into
“the oven?” Fear God, and thou shalt no
longer tremble at the terrors of man. What
hurt can man do thee, either by his words or
by his actions? He injureth himself more than
he can injure thee; and whoever he be, he shall
not escape the judgment of God. Set God,
therefore, continually before thine eyes, and
strive not with the quarrelsome words of man.
What, though for a while thou shouldest seem
to yield, and suffer shame, which thou hast not
deserved—yet be not indignant in consequence;
and let not impatience obscure the lustre of thy
crown. Look up to me in the highest heavens,
who am able to deliver thee from all evil, and
to render to “every man according to his
“works.”

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Freedom of Heart can only be obtained by a pure and total Surrender of Self-will.

ORSAKE thyself, my son, and thou Luke ix. 23. shalt find me. Renounce all self-seeking, all peculiarity of possession, and thou shalt enjoy the true riches. The moment thou hast made such an absolute surrender of thyself as to leave no ground for resumption, an ampler share of grace shall be added to thee.

2. Lord, how often must I perform this act of resignation, and in what instances is Self to be relinquished? At all times; as well this hour as the next; in matters of temporary, and of eternal moment. I admit no exceptions, but expect to find thee divested of all that can be called thy own. Otherwise, how canst thou be mine, and I thine, unless thy whole frame of mind and disposition be entirely devoted to my service? The sooner this surrender of thyself be made, and the more complete and sincere it be, the more acceptable to me, and the greater thy own gain.

3. There are, who thus resign themselves with secret reservations: placing not their *whole* confidence in GOD, but keeping back some

Luke ix. 59,
60. pretences for self-dependence. Some are *at first* sincere ; but pressed heavily by temptation, they recall and would cancel the self surrender they have made ; so that their progress in virtue is little or nothing. These cannot possibly attain the freedom of a pure heart, nor enjoy the grace of a pleasing familiarity with myself ; for without a total resignation and daily sacrifice of self, this beatifick union cannot be formed.

Matt. ix. 21. 4. I have said to thee often, and now repeat the saying, Forsake thyself, resign thyself, and thou shalt enjoy great internal peace. Give all for all ; seek nothing for thyself ; call for nothing back ; adhere firmly and unchangeably to me, as the condition of possessing me, and thus thou shalt attain freedom of heart, and darkness shall not envelope thee. Strive for, pray for, earnestly desire this one single object — that thou mightest be stripped of all self possession, and naked to follow thy naked Master ; to die to thyself, and live eternally to me. Then, all vain phantoms, all wicked perturbations, and all superfluous care, shall subside : then, immoderate fear shall recede, and inordinate love shall perish.

Matt. xvi. 20-
6. *Isaiah v. 30.*

Rom. vi. 6,7.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Of Self-Government in external Matters, and of having recourse to God in Difficulties and Dangers.

 ENDEAVOUR, my son, in every place and action, and in every external occupation, to be inwardly free, and master of thyself; that all things may be subject to thee, and not thou to them. Thou must not be the servant and slave, but the absolute lord and governor of all thy actions; a free and genuine Israelite, translated into the inheritance Rom. viii. 21. and liberty of the sons of God; who stand upon the interests of time to contemplate the glories of eternity; who cast only a hasty glance upon transitory things, and look steadfastly upon eternal; and who, instead of making temporal objects an ultimate end, render them subservient to some purpose of piety or charity, even as they were ordained by God, the sovereign workman, who has left nothing disorderly in the works of Ps. viii. 1, &c. his creation.

2. If, even in all events, thou suffereſt not thyſelf to be governed by appearances, nor regardeſt what is heard and ſeen with a carnal eye, but in every difficulty and danger enterreſt Exod. xxxiii. 9, &c.

immediately into the tabernacle, with Moses, to consult the Lord, thou shalt sometimes receive an answer from the divine Oracle, and shalt return instructed in many things, both present and to come. And as Moses always retired to the tabernacle, for the determination of doubtful and disputed questions, and fled to prayer for aid to be preserved from danger and from wicked men, so shouldest thou also enter the

Matt. vi. 6. sacred temple of thy heart, fervently imploring the divine support. Thou hast read, that Joshua

Joshua ix. 14. and the children of Israel, “because they asked “not counsel at the mouth of the **LORD**,” were betrayed into a league with the Gibeonites, being deluded by false piety, and giving too much credit to their treacherous words.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Against over much Importunity in Worldly Affairs.

MY SON, commit thy cause invariably to me: I will dispose of it fitly in due season. Wait patiently the dispensations of my providence, and thou shalt find “all things work together for thy good.”

Rom. viii. 28.

2. **LORD**, most willingly I commit all my affairs to thy disposal; for cogitations profit little,

O, that I took no thought for the morrow, but could every moment unreservedly offer myself up to thy good pleasure !

3. My son, man oftentimes labours to acquire that which he desires: but possession as frequently defeats enjoyment; because our affections towards the same object are not durable, but the rather impel us to some new one. It is not, therefore, a trifling matter, to forsake Self, even in the most inconsiderable gratifications.

3. Self-denial is the basis of spiritual perfection : and he that truly denies himself, is arrived at a state of great freedom and safety. The old enemy, however, whose nature is most repugnant to every good thing, never ceases his temptation; but night and day forms dangerous snares, if peradventure he may precipitate the incautious into his wiles. “ Watch and pray, therefore, “ that thou enter not into temptation.”

1 Pet. v. 8.
Matt. xxvi.
41.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

In Man there is no Good ; and therefore he hath nothing in which to glory.

Pf. viii. 4.



ORD, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him ; and the son of man, that Thou visitest him ? ” What, indeed, hath he done, that thou shouldest bestow upon him thy holy Spirit ?

Gen. xliv. 16. Lord, what cause have I to complain, if thou withdrawest thy presence, and leavest me to myself ? Or how can I justly remonstrate, if my requests are not granted ? This only I can truly think and say : “ LORD, I am nothing, and have “ nothing ; but am destitute in all things, tend- “ ing always to nothing ; and if I were not aided “ by thee, and inwardly instructed by thy Spirit, “ I should immediately become dark and insen- Pf. li. 12. sible as death.”

Pf. cii. 12. 2. “ Thou, O LORD, art always the same, “ and shalt endure for ever.” Thou art always just, righteous, and good ; with righteousness and goodness governing the universe, and ordering all things in wisdom. But I, who in myself am more inclined to evil than to good, never continue long in one stay, and am changeable as the events of time that pass over me. Yet, Lord,

it will be quickly better, when thou reachest forth thy helping hand ; for Thou canst so firmly strengthen and support me, that my countenance shall no longer change with the various changes of this life, but in Thee alone my heart shall turn and rest.

3. Wherefore, if I could but perfectly dispossess myself of all human consolation, either from a purer devotion, or from a necessity which compels me to seek after Thee, then might I justly hope to receive a more abundant measure of grace, and to rejoice in the gift of new consolation.

4. Thanks be to Thee, O Lord, from whom all good proceeds, whenever matters prosper with me. I am an inconstant and feeble man, and vanity and nothing before thee. What have I then to glory in ? And why do I desire to be counted of some repute ? Is it not for nothing ? and *that*, surely, is most vain. Vain-glory is not only the vainest of all vanities, but a great pest, that draws away the soul from true glory, and robs it of the grace of heaven. While man labours only to please himself, he displeases Thee ; while he sighs for the praises of man, he loses the true substance of virtue.

5. True glory and holy joy are to be found 1 Cor. i. 31. only in glorifying Thee, and not oneself : and man should rejoice in thy name ; not in the splendour of his own imaginary virtues, nor in

Pf. xxxix. 11.

Pf. cxliv. 4.
Jerem. ix. 23,
&c.

the delight of any creature, unless for thy sake. Praised therefore be *thy* name, not *mine*; magnified be thy work, not mine! yea, for ever blessed be thy holy name!—but, to me, let no praise be given. Thou art my glory, and the joy of my ^{2 Cor. xii. 5.} heart! In thee will I glory, and in Thee rejoice, all the day long; and “of myself I will “not glory, but in mine infirmities!”

^{John v. 44.} 6. Let the Jews seek “honour one of another;” I will seek that “honour which com-“eth from GOD.” For all human glory, all temporal honour, all worldly grandeur, is, com-pared with thy eternal glory, vanity and folly. O my truth, my mercy, my God! O holy and ^{1 Tim. i. 17.} blessed Trinity!—to thee alone be praise, and ^{Rev. vii. 12.} honour, and virtue, and glory ascribed, through the endless ages of eternity!

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Of Contempt of all Temporal Honour.

 Y son, take not the thing to heart, when others are honoured and exalted, and thou art despised and debased. Lift up thy heart to me in heaven, and thou shalt not be disturbed by the contempt of men on earth.

2. Lord, we are surrounded by mental dark-ness, and easily betrayed into vanity. If I look

well into myself, no creature can do me wrong ; and, therefore, I have no just cause of complaint against Thee. On the contrary, because I have frequently and grievously sinned against Thee, all creatures may justly make war against me. To me, only shame and confusion of face are due ; Daniel ix. 8. but, to Thee, praise, and honour, and glory. And, unless I have prepared myself for this—to be willing to be despised and forsaken of all creatures, and to seem nothing to myself—I know that my spirit cannot possibly be established in peace, nor illuminated by Truth, nor brought into union with Thee.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Peace is not to be found in Man.



ON, if thou placest thy peace in man, even from a conformity of sentiments and manners, thou wilt be always unsettled and distressed : but if thou continually seekest after me, the living and abiding truth, the secession, or the death of a friend, will not afflict thee. In ME ought the love of a friend to be concentrated and strengthened : and for my sake ought every good man to be loved, and made much of in this life. Without me, friendship hath neither worth nor stability ; and there

can be no pure and genuine love but such as I inspire.

2. Thou shouldest be so mortified to all these personal affections and attachments, that, as far as relates to thyself, thou shouldest wish to be able to live apart from all human intercourse. The soul draws near to GOD, only in proportion as it recedes the farthest from all earthly comfort. With so much higher exaltation doth it ascend to Him, as it descends more deeply into itself, and becomes viler in its own estimation. He that appropriateth any good to himself, impedes the entrance of the grace of GOD; for the Holy Spirit seeks a contrite and humble heart.

^{1 Pet. v. 5, 6.} 3. If thou wert brought to a true sense of thy own nothingness, and emptied of all selfish and earthly affections, I would surely “come unto thee” with the treasures of grace, “and make “my abode with thee:” But while thou fondly gazest upon the creature, thou turnest from the presence of the Creator. Learn, therefore, for the love of the Creator, to subdue the love of the creature; and thou wilt be qualified to attain unto divine knowledge. It matters not how inconsiderable is the object of thy pursuit; —while it is vehemently loved, and unintermittingly regarded, it corrupts the soul, and retards its progress to “the highest good.”

^{John xvi. 23.}

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Of the Vanity of Human Learning.

BE not captivated, my Son, with the fair and subtle speech of man ; for “ the ^{1 Cor. iv. 20.} kingdom of GOD is not in words, but in power.” Attend only to the truths of my word, which enlighten the understanding, and inflame the heart ; which excite compunction, and beget various consolation. Read my words : not that you may seem more learned and wiser, but that you may study how to mortify your evil passions ; a knowledge, of more importance than the solution of many difficult questions.

2. What, though thou mayest have read, and known much, it will behove thee to revert to the ONE GREAT PRINCIPLE. I am he that teacheth man knowledge, and giveth to the simple that light and understanding which no human instruction can communicate. He, who listeneth unto my voice, shall soon become wise, and shall make great progress in the spirit. But woe be to them, who, reckless of turning to know my ways, devote their time and labour to the curious speculations of man ! A day will come, when CHRIST, the Teacher of teachers, ^{Prov. i. 4.} ^{Prov. ii. 6.} the Lord of Angels, shall appear, to hear the lessons which conscience has given to all : and then ^{Colos. iii. 4.}

Zeph. i. 2. “ shall Jerusalem be searched with candles ; the
 1 Cor. iv. 5. “ hidden things of darkness shall be brought to
 “ light ;” and the arguments of tongues shall be
 silent.

3. I am he that exalteth the humble and sim-
 ple mind ; imparting to it such a perception of
 eternal truth, as could not be acquired by a ten
 years’ labour in the schools. I teach, without
 the clamour of words, without the confusion of
 opposite opinions, without the struggle for ho-
 nours, and without the strife of arguments. I
 teach to despise earth, to become fastidious in
 present enjoyments, and seek after heaven ; to
 sigh for spiritual things ; to shun honour, and
 to bear contempt ; to place all hope in me ; to
 desire nothing besides me ; and, above all, ar-
 dently to love me.

4. By an intimate love of me, some have learnt
 divine things, and spoken miraculous truths. It
 profiteth more to relinquish all worldly matters,
 than to study and be conversant in subtleties.

5. To some, I speak only of common truths ;
 to others, of special ones. To some, I manifest
 myself gently in signs and figures ; to others, I

Dan. ii. 28. reveal mysteries in much light. The scriptures
 speak but one language, but all are not equally
 informed by them. I am the inward teacher of
 truth, the searcher of the heart, the understander
 1 Cor. xii. 11. of thoughts, the promoter of actions, “ dividing
 to every man severally as I will.”

CHAPTER XL.

Of being disengaged from the Business of the World.

T is expedient for thee, my Son, to be ignorant of many things, and to consider thyself as dead to worldly matters ; and as one to whom “ the world is crucified.” Be apparently deaf to many things that thou hearest, and keep thy thoughts fixed on “ the things that belong unto thy peace.” It is better to turn away from all that produces perplexity and disturbance, and to leave every one in the enjoyment of his own opinion, than to be held in subjection by contentious arguments. If thou didst but stand well with GOD, and didst regard only *his* judgment, thou wouldest more easily bear defeat in contention with man.

Gal. vi. 14.
Luke xix. 42.

2. O LORD, to what a pass have we come ! Behold, how a temporal loss is bewailed !—and to redeem it, how we labour and are agitated !—but a spiritual loss is speedily forgotten ; or, if late redeemed, it may be late in life. We are sufficiently busy about many things that have neither worth nor duration ; while “ the one “ thing needful ” is neglected and passed by.

The whole man plunges into the stream of sensual life; and unless stopt in this course, he is borne away with the torrent, and is willingly submerged in the same.

CHAPTER XLI.

Of Credulity in the Promises and Professions of Men.

Pf. lx. 11.

Pf. xxxvii. 39.

Pf. cxxv. 1.

 O Thou, O Lord, “give me help from trouble; for vain is the help of man!” How often have I failed of support, where I thought myself sure of it; and how often have I found it, where I had least reason to expect it! Vain, therefore, is all trust in man; but the salvation of the righteous, O **LO****R****D**, is in Thee. Blessed, therefore, be thy holy name, O **LO****R****D**, my **GOD**, in all things that befall us! We are weak and unstable creatures, easily deceived, and suddenly changed.

2. Who is the man, that can so cautiously and circumspectly keep himself in all things, that sometimes he may not fall into deceit and perplexity? But he, O **LO****R****D**, who confides in Thee, and in singleness of heart seeks Thee, shall not so easily be betrayed: and though he chance to fall into some trouble, and be ever so deeply involved in it, yet thy merciful hand will soon

deliver him from it, or thy powerful consolations support him in it; for Thou wilt not forsake him that trusteth in thee to the end. Rare is that friend who will continue faithful in all the exigencies of friendship. Thou, O LORD, Thou alone art most faithful in all seasons, and there is none other like unto thee. O how truly wise must be that holy soul, which says, “my mind is firmly established, for it is founded in CHRIST.” If this were my state, human fear would not so easily trouble me, nor bitter words affect me.

Ps. xxxi. 1.
Eccl. vi. 7.

Colos. ii. 6, 7.
1 Cor. iii. 11.
Psalm lxiv. 3.

3. Who can foresee all things? Who can guard against future evil? If those evils that are foreseen, often hurt us, how will unforeseen evils more grievously affect us? But, wretched creature that I am, why did I not provide more wisely for myself? Why have I given easy credit to men, who are but frail creatures like myself, although designated sometimes as Angels? Whom ought I to have believed? Whom, Lord, but Thee, who art the truth, that can John xiv. 6. neither deceive, nor be deceived? But “all men “are liars;” frail and inconstant; prone to de- Ps. cxvi. 11. ceive in words; so that hasty credit is never to be given, even to those declarations that wear the appearance of truth.

4. How wisely hast Thou warned us, O Lord, to “beware of men!”—How justly said—“a Micah vii. 6. “man’s enemies are the men of his own house!” Nor are those to be believed who say, “Lo, Matt. xxiv. 23.

“ Christ is here ; or, lo, he is there ! ” I have learnt these truths at some loss ; and I pray that they may more increase my caution than display my folly.

5. “ Be cautious (says a certain one), be cautious ; keep the secret which I impart to thee : ” and while I hold my peace, and believe the secret inviolate, this very man, unable to keep the silence which he imposes, betrays both himself and me, and goes his way. From such false and imprudent spirits, protect me, O LORD ! that I fall not into their hands, nor imitate their practices. Give truth and faithfulness to my lips, and remove far from me a deceitful tongue ; that I may not do that to another, which I am unwilling another should do to me.

6. O, how peaceful and good it is, to take no notice of the opinions and actions of others : neither to believe every thing indifferently, nor to report every thing one hears : to seek Thee as the inspector of the heart : not to be carried about by every blast of words : but to wish every thing, inwardly and outwardly, to be accomplished according to thy will.

7. How important is it, for the preservation of thy heavenly grace, to shun the notice of the world ; and, instead of cultivating attainments that attract admiration and applause, to aspire, with continual ardour, after a perfect elevation

of the heart to Thee. How often has the growth of holiness been checked, by its being too hastily made known, and too highly commended! And how greatly hath it flourished in that humble state of silence, so desirable in the present life, Job vii. 1, &c. which is one scene of temptation and of warfare!

CHAPTER XLII.

*Of Confidence in the Righteous Judgment of GOD,
under the various Accusations of Men.*

 Y Son, stand firmly, and hope in me. Job vi. 26.
What are words, but words? They fly as wind through the air, and hurt not so much as a stone. If guilty, resolve to make the accusation an occasion of amendment; if innocent, resolve to submit to it willingly, and bear it patiently, for my sake. It is, surely, a little matter for thee, who hast not yet endured severe stripes, sometimes to bear the buffeting of words. And why should so small a matter make an impression upon thy heart, if thou wert not still carnal, and didst not too highly value the favour of men? Thou art afraid of being despised; and, therefore, not bearing reprobation, thou seekest to palliate thyself by the shadows of mean excuses. But examine thyself more closely; and confess, that the world, and

a vain desire of pleasing men, still liveth in thee : for whilst thou refusest to be brought to shame and to be buffeted for thy faults, it is evident that thou art not yet thoroughly humbled, nor “ crucified to the world, nor the world to thee.”

1 Cor. xiv. 9.

2. Hear MY WORD, and thou wilt not be moved by ten thousand opprobrious words of men. Consider, if every thing was said against thee that the utmost malignity could suggest, what hurt could it do thee, if thou only let it pass without notice, regarding it as a mere mote in the sunbeam ? Could it even pluck a single hair from thy head ? He that liveth not in my presence, manifested in his heart, is easily disturbed by vituperative words ; but he that confideth in me, with the least dependence on his own judgment, shall be freed from human terror. I am the sole judge, and the discerner of all secret thoughts.* I know the cause, the nature, and the effect, of every injury. The word of reproach came forth from me ; it was uttered by my permission, “ that the thoughts of many “ hearts may be revealed.” I shall judge both the innocent and the guilty at the last day, but it is my will to try them both by a previous secret judgment.

Luke ii. 35.

3. The testimony of man is often fallible : my judgment is true ; it shall stand and not be overthrown. For the greater part, it is hidden, and in particular parts it is known only to few ;

Rom. ii. 2.

yet it never errs, nor can possibly err, although in the sight of fools it seemeth not right. To me, therefore, thou must refer thy cause in all human accusation, and not trust to thy own judgment. The righteous will never be moved by whatever befalls him from God: whether, therefore, he is falsely accused, he will not be cast down; or whether he is justly defended, he will not vainly triumph: for he considereth, that “the righteous Lord trieth the hearts and “reins;” that he judgeth not as man judgeth, by deceitful appearances; for what is often culpable in *his* eyes, is thought commendable in the estimation of man.

Psalms vii. 9.
John vii. 24.

4. O Lord God, righteous, strong, and patient Judge!—who knowest the frailty and depravity of man—be thou my strength, my confidence: for my own conscience sufficeth not. Thou knowest what I know not; and therefore, whether I think I deserve it, or not, I ought to humble myself under every reproof, and to bear it with meekness. O pardon me, as often as I have not done thus; and again give me a larger measure of grace! Thy abundant mercy is far more favourable to the attainment of pardon, than the opinion of mine own righteousness to the defence of my secret conscience; and although in many instances my conscience condemns me not, yet I am not, therefore, justified; because, without thy mercy, “no man living ^{1 Cor. iv. 4.} Ps. cxliii. 2. “shall be justified.”

CHAPTER XLIII.

That all the Afflictions of the present Life are to be endured for the sake of Eternal Life.



Y Son, let not the labours which thou hast undertaken for my sake, break thy spirit; nor the afflictions, hitherto sustained, cast thee down: but make my promise thy strength and comfort in every event. I am enabled to recompence, above all manner and measure. Thou shalt not long labour here, nor always groan under afflictions. Wait but a little time, and thou shalt see a speedy end of trouble; an hour will come, when labour and tumult shall cease; for every thing is but moderate, and short-lived, that passeth away in the current of time.

Matt. xx. 4, 7.

2. Do what thou hast to do: labour faithfully

Gen. xv. 1.

in my vineyard: I myself am thy reward. Write, read, sing, bewail, be silent, pray, bear afflictions bravely: eternal life is worthy of all these, and

Rom. viii. 18.

even of greater conflicts.

3. On a certain day, known only to the Lord, the reign of peace shall commence; when there shall be neither day nor night, but uninterrupted light, infinite splendour, unchangeable peace, and

Rom. vii. 24.

secure repose. Then, thou wilt no longer say, “ who shall deliver me from the body of this

“ death ? ” nor exclaim, “ woe is me, that my pilgrimage is prolonged ! ”—for then “ death ^{1 Cor. xv. 54.} shall be swallowed up in victory, and salvation shall be complete : there shall be no anxiety, but ^{Rev. xxi. 4.} a happy state of cheerfulness, and a sweet and decorous society.

4. O, couldest thou but see the unfading crowns which the blessed wear in Heaven ! —and with what triumphant glory they, whom the world once despised, and thought unworthy even of life itself, are now invested ! —verily, thou wouldest humble thyself to the dust, and rather chuse to be accounted inferior to all men, than superior even to one. Instead of fighing for the joyful days of this life, thou wouldest rather rejoice in suffering afflictions for the sake of GOD ; and wouldest count it great gain to be thought as nothing among men.

5. O, if thou hadst a true sense of these things, and didst suffer them to enter into the depths of thy heart, couldest thou dare to prefer one complaint ? Is any labour too painful to be undertaken for eternal life ? Is the gain or loss of the kingdom of God, an alternative of no importance ? Lift up thine eyes, therefore, to heaven. Behold I, and all my Saints, all that have taken up the cross in this world, now rejoice, are now comforted, now secure, now at rest ; and shall abide with me for ever in the kingdom of my Father.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Of the Day of Eternity ; and of the Miseries of this Life.



MOST blessed mansion of the heavenly Jerusalem ! O most effulgent day of eternity, which night obscureth not, but the Supreme Truth continually enlighteneth ! a day of perpetual peace and joy, incapable of change or intermission ! O, that all temporal nature were dissolved, and that this day would dawn upon us ! It shineth now, in the splendour of perpetual light, to the blessed ; but to the poor pilgrims on earth, it appeareth only *Hebr. xi. 13.* afar off, and “through a glass darkly.” The *1Cor. xiii. 12.* redeemed sons of heaven know the raptures of that day, while the banished sons of Eve lament its bitterness and irksomeness. The days of this *Gen. xlviij. 9.* life are, indeed, short and evil, teeming with distress and anguish ; in which man is defiled with many sins, agitated with many passions, disquieted with many fears, tortured with many cares, distractèd with many curiosities, involved in many vanities, encompassed with many errors, worn down with many labours, vexed with temptations, enervated with pleasures, and tormented with want.

2. Oh ! when shall these evils cease ? When shall I be delivered from the miserable slavery of sin ? When, O Lord, shall I think and speak, and entirely rejoice, alone in thee ? When shall I regain my native liberty, without “ let or hindrance ” of body and mind ? When shall solid, imperturbable and secure peace,—peace, within and without,—peace, on all sides consolidated, —when shall THIS PEACE succeed ? Merciful Jesus, when shall I stand to live to thee ! to contemplate the glory of thy kingdom ? When shalt Thou be to me All in all ? Oh, when shall I Col. iii. 11. dwell with Thee in that kingdom, which thou hast prepared for thy beloved before the foundation of the world ? I am left a poor and banished man, in the dominions of my enemy, where perpetual war rages, and every evil has its birth. Matt. xxv. 34.

3. O soften the rigour of my banishment ! Affuage the violence of my sorrow ; for my whole soul sigheth after Thee, and all that the world offers for my comfort adds only to the burthen that oppresses me. I long, O Lord, to enjoy Thee thoroughly and truly, but am not able to lay hold of Thee. I would fain attach myself to heavenly objects ; but earthly and unmortified affections keep me down. In mind, I would subdue all things ; but in flesh I become unwillingly the slave of all things. And thus, wretched man, I am fighting with, and becoming a burthen to,

myself; while the spirit is tending to heaven, and the flesh to earth.

4. O, what do I inwardly suffer, when, raising my soul to Thee, a crowd of carnal images rises up amidst my prayers! “O my GOD, be not far from me! Put not away thy servant in anger. Cast forth thy lightning, and scatter these illusions; “shoot out thine arrows, “and destroy” the enemy’s power! Call in my wandering thoughts and desires to Thyself; make me forgetful of worldly objects; give me power to cast away immediately the imaginations of wickedness. O eternal truth, come to my help, that no vanity may have power to move me! O heavenly sweetnes, enter the temple of my heart, and let all impurity fly thy presence!

5. Mercifully pardon me, whenever, in prayer, my thoughts have wandered to other objects than Thee! I confess, indeed, that I have accustomed myself to great distractions; and instead of being *present* while I stand or kneel, I am *carried away* just as my thoughts lead me. Where my thoughts are, there I am; and my thoughts are too frequently with that which I most love. Those objects too soon recur, which corrupt nature or sinful habit have made delightful.

Matt. vi. 21. 6. Hence it is, that Thou, O Truth, hast expressly declared, that “where the treasure is, “there will the heart be also.” Accordingly, if I love heaven, I take pleasure in meditating on

Pf. xxvii. 9.

Pf. cxliv. 6.

heavenly enjoyments ; if I love the world, I rejoice in its advantages, and grieve in its miseries ; if I love the flesh, my imagination dwells upon the pleasures of the flesh ; if I love the spirit, I delight to think of spiritual things. Whatever I chiefly love, of *that* I delight chiefly to hear and speak ; and I carry home with me its diversified images.

7. But, blessed is the man, who, on account of Thee, O Lord, can dismiss the creature from his consideration ; doing violence to nature, and crucifying the concupiscence of the flesh by the fervour of the spirit ; so that, with a clear conscience, he may pray purely to Thee : and all worldly desires and wants being thoroughly rooted out, he may be made a fit participator of angelic choirs.

CHAPTER XLV.

*Of the Desire of Eternal Life ; and the promised
Blessedness to those who strive to obtain it.*

 Y son, when thou perceivest the desire of eternal happiness to be breathed into thee, and longest to be dissolved from the tabernacle of the body — that thou mayest, without vicissitude of shadow, contemplate my brightness — open thy heart, and with all the eagerness of desire receive this holy in-

James i. 17.

² Peter i. 13.

spiration. Give amplest thanks, and let praise be faithfully rendered to the Sovereign Goodness, which so worthily dealeth with thee, so mercifully visiteth thee, so fervently exciteth thee, so powerfully raiseth thee up, lest, by thy own proper weight, thou shouldest fall to the earth. This new principle of life within thee, is not the production of thy own reasoning, and thy own effects; but is the pure offspring of divine grace, to lead thee on to virtue and to greater humility; to prepare thee for future conflicts, and to enable thee to adhere to me with all thy heart, and to study to serve me with fervent free will.

Eccl. xxii.

24.

2. The fire is often ardent, my son; but the flame ascends not without smoke. Thus the desires of some, while they burn for the enjoyment of heaven, are not freed from the temptation of carnal affection; and that which is so earnestly sought from God, is not sought wholly and purely for his honour. Such is often thy desire, which thou hast so importunately urged; for that cannot be pure, which is mixed with self-interest. Seek not that which is for thy own delight and advantage, but that which is acceptable and honourable to me: for if thou judgest rightly, thou wilt always prefer the accomplishment of my will to the gratification of thy desire.

Ps. xxxviii. 9.

3. I know thy desire, and thy “groaning is “not hid from me.” Thou wouldest this mo-

ment be admitted into “ the glorious liberty of “ the Sons of God ; ” now, thou longest for Rom. viii. 21. eternal mansions, and the unfading pleasures of the heavenly Canaan : but thy hour is not yet come : a far different time must first take place ; that is to say, a time of probation, of labour, and of contest. Thou wishest now to be filled with the “ sovereign good ; ” but thou art not yet capable of enjoying it. I am that SOVEREIGN GOOD ; wait patiently for me, saith the Lord, till the kingdom of God cometh.

4. Thou must still be proved upon earth, and exercised in many vicissitudes. Some measures of consolation shall be imparted, but the fulness of peace and joy is reserved for another world.

“ Be strong,” therefore, “ and of good courage,” Joshua i. 6. as well in doing, as in suffering, that which is repugnant to fallen nature ; for thou must now “ put on the new man,” and be changed into Ephes. iv. 24. another character. Thou wilt often be obliged to act contrary to thy will, and to relinquish that which thou hast chosen : the designs of others will often succeed, and thy own prove abortive : that which *others* say shall be eagerly listened to ; what thou sayest *thyself*, shall be considered as nothing. Others shall ask and receive ; thou shalt ask, and not obtain ; the tongue of fame shall speak long and loud of others, and be utterly silent of thyself : others shall be advanced to stations of wealth and ho-

nour, while thou art passed by as unworthy of trust, and incapable of service.

5. At such trials, nature will be sometimes offended and grieved. Yet much benefit will be derived from a meek and silent submission; for it is by such or similar trials, that the servant of the Lord proves his fidelity in denying himself, and subduing his corrupt appetites in all things. The difficulty of destroying SELF is greatest, when thou suffereſt a course of events, and beholdest a scene of human transactions, wholly contrary to thy own will; especially, when that which thou art required to concur with, or to execute, seems either ill-timed, or of small importance. And because thou art placed in a state of subordination, thou dareſt not resist the ruling power, but findest it hard to follow the nod of another, and either to relinquish thy own sentiments, or to act contrary to them.

6. But consider, my son, the speedy end, the fruit, and the abundant reward, of all these thy trials; and thou ſhalt not have cause of disquietude and distress, but of strongest consolation and encouragements to persevering patience. In
Hebr. vi. 18. exchange for that small portion of ſelfish will, which thou haſt freely forſaken in this world, thou ſhalt always have thy will in heaven: there, whatſoever thou willeſt, thou ſhalt find; and whatſoever thou deſireſt, thou ſhalt poſſeſſ:

there, thou shalt enjoy all good, without the fear of losing any part: there, thy will being always the same with mine, thou shalt desire nothing extraneous or private; there, thou shalt meet with no resistance, no accusation, no contradiction, no obstruction; but all good shall be present at once, to satisfy the largest wishes of thy heart. There, for transient shame, patiently endured, I will give immortal honour; “the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; Isaiah xi. 3. “and for the lowermost seat, the throne of an everlasting kingdom.” There, the fruits of obedience shall appear, the labour of penitence 1 Macc. ii. 57. rejoice, and humble subjection shall receive a crown of glory. Now, therefore, incline thyself humbly to the power of every human being: 1 Peter ii. 13. nor regard who it is that hath said this, or commanded that; but let it be thy only care to take all in good part, and to execute with a willing mind whatever is enjoined or requested, whether by thy superiour, thy inferiour, or thy equal.

8. Let one man seek after this gratification, and another after that; let this man glory in one excellence, and that in another; and let their fame be echoed by thousands of tongues; but do THOU, my Son, glory neither in this nor in that: rejoice only in the contempt of thyself, and the accomplishment of my will: let it be all thy wish, that, whether in life or in death, Philip. i. 26. God may be always glorified in thee! 1 Cor. i. 31.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Of the Resignation of a Desolate Spirit to the Will of God.



LORD GOD, holy Father, be Thou blessed now and for ever!—for as Thou willest, it is done; and all that thou willest is good. Let thy servant rejoice, not in himself, nor in any other creature, but in Thee; for Thou only art the object of true joy: Thou, O Lord, art my hope and my crown, my joy, and my honour! What doth thy servant possess, which he hath not received from Thee, even without his own merits? All is thine, whatsoever hath been done for me, or given to me. “I am poor and afflicted from my youth up:” and sometimes my soul is sorrowful, even unto tears; and sometimes is filled with consternation, at the evils which threaten to overwhelm me.

2. I long, indeed, for the blessings of peace. I earnestly implore the peace of thy children, who are fed by Thee in the light of thy countenance. Shouldest thou bestow peace—shouldst thou pour forth the treasures of heavenly joy—the soul of thy servant shall be full of harmony, and devoutly celebrate thy praise. But if Thou still withdrawest thyself, as thou art

often pleased to do, thy servant cannot “run Pf. cix. 32.
 “the way of thy commandments;” but, his
 knees sinking beneath him, he must smite his
 bosom in the dust; because it is not with him
 as it was yesterday, and the day before, “when Job xxix. 3.
 “thy lamp shone upon his head,” and “under Pf. xvii. 18.
 “the shadow of thy wings” he was protected John xvii. 25.
 from overwhelming evils. John xii. 23.

3. O righteous Father, ever to be praised, the hour of thy servant’s trial is at hand! O loving Father, it is meet that, in this hour, thy servant should suffer something for thy sake! O Father, ever to be adored, the hour is now come, which Thou didst foreknow from all eternity—in which thy servant should be oppressed and enfeebled for a while in the outward man, that the inward man may live to Thee for ever! For a short time, he should be disgraced, humbled, and brought to nothing in the sight of men; should be broken with sufferings, and worn down with infirmities; that he may be John xvi. 20. qualified to rise again in the morning of the new light, and be glorified in the heavens! Holy Father, so thou hast willed, and so Thou hast ordained; and that is to come to pass which Thou thyself didst appoint.

4. It is thy peculiar favour to him, whom Thou hast condescended to choose for thy friend, to let him suffer in this world in testimony of his love for thee: and come the affliction when,

Ps. cxix. 71. and how, it may, it comes from thy counsels ; for without thy counsel, and providence, and cause, nothing is done upon earth. “ It is,” therefore, “ good for me, O Lord, that I should “ be afflicted ; that I may learn thy statutes,” and utterly cast from me all self-confidence and self-exaltation. It is profitable for me, that

Ps. xliv. 15. “ shame should cover my face ;” that, in seeking comfort, I may have recourse, not to men, but to Thee ; and that I may also hence learn to adore thy unsearchable judgments, who afflictest the just together with the unjust, but not without equity and righteousness.

Deut. xxxii. 5. I give Thee thanks, that Thou hast not spared the evil that is in me ; but hast punished me with the scourges of love, inflicting pains, and sending forth sorrows, both from within and from without. Of all under heaven and on earth, there is none that can bring me comfort, but Thou, O Lord my God, the sovereign physician of diseased souls ; “ who woundest and

Tobit xiii. 2. ^{39.} “ healest, who bringest down to the grave and “ raisest up again ! ” Thy chastisement is upon me, and thy rod shall teach me wisdom.

6. Behold, beloved Father, I am in thy hands ; I bow myself under the rod of thy correction. O smite my back and my neck, that I may bend my untractable spirit to thy will. Make me, thy holy and humble disciple, as Thou hast often made others, that I may walk according to thy

command. To Thee I commend myself, and all belonging to me. Thou knowest the whole extent of being, and all its parts ; and no thought or desire passeth in the heart of man, that is hidden from Thee. Thou hast known the future, before it came to pass : and it is not necessary for any one to teach Thee, and to apprise thee of what goeth on upon earth. Thou knowest what is most expedient for my advancement in holiness, and how effectually tribulation contributeth to wear away the rust of corruption. Do with me, therefore, according to thy own will ; only despise me not for my sinful life, which Thou alone perfectly understandest, and Thou alone canst effectually change.

7. Grant, O Lord, that from this hour I may know only that, which is worthy to be known ; that I may love only that, which is worthy to be loved ; that I may praise only that, which chiefly pleaseth Thee ; and that I may esteem only what seemeth precious to Thee, and despise that which is contemptible in thy sight. Suffer me no longer to judge by the imperfect perception of my own eyes, or by the hearing of men ignorant like myself ; but enable me to judge rightly both of visible and invisible things ; and, above all, to know and to obey thy will.

8. Those who form their judgment only upon what they hear and see, are often mistaken ; and the lovers of the world also err and are deceived,

John xvi. 30.
Job xlvi. 2.

Job x. 4.
Deut. i. 37.

1 Sam. xvi. 7.
1 Cor. ii. 6.

If. xi. iii.

John v. 4.

through their continual adherence to the objects of sense. Is a man in truth more benefited, as he becomes greater in the opinion of his fellow creatures? When men extol each other, the cheat frequently imposes upon the cheat; the vain flatters the vain; the blind leads the blind; the weak supports the weak; and truly, the more empty the praise, the greater the shame: for, as it is said by that holy servant, St. Francis, “Such as every man is in thy sight, O Lord, such, and no greater, is he in himself.”

CHAPTER XLVII.

When we are incapable of the Higher Exercises of Devotion, we should practise the Lower.

Gen. iii. 16,
17, &c.

T is not possible for thee, my Son, always to continue in the fervent exercise of virtues, nor always to stand upon the loftier heights of contemplation; but, through the influence of original corruption, thou must sometimes descend to humbler occupations, and, with weariness and unwillingness, be compelled to bear the burthen of thy corruptible life. As long as thou art united to an earthly body, thou shalt feel languor and heaviness of heart. It behoves thee, therefore, in the flesh, to groan under the burthen of the flesh;

because thou canst not, unintermittingly, continue in the study of spiritual things and heavenly contemplations. Rom. vii. 24.

2. In such a season it is expedient for thee to betake thyself to humble and external exercises, and to seek recreation in good deeds, from the diligent practice of common duties ; with unshaken confidence to expect my return from on high to visit thee, and with patience to bear this state of banishment and desolation of mind, till I visit thee again, and deliver thee from all thy anxieties. For I will then make thee forget thy past sufferings, in the enjoyment of inward peace. I will so fully open to thee the fields of the divine scriptures, that with “an enlarged heart” Pf. cxix. 32. thou shalt begin to “run the way of my commandments ;” and shalt confess, that “the sufferings of the present time are not worthy “to be compared with the glory which shall be “revealed in thee.” Heb. xi. 13. John xvi. 22. Rom. viii. 18.

3. LORD, I am not only unworthy of thy comforts, but of the least visitations of thy spirit ; and, therefore, Thou dealest righteously with me, when thou leavest me desolate and destitute. Though, from the anguish of my soul, I might shed an ocean of tears, yet I may be unworthy of thy consolation. Hence I merit only stripes and punishment ; because I have frequently and grievously resisted thy will, and in many things have offended. From a careful retrospection on

Pſ. lxxxvi. my past life, I cannot plead the least title to thy
smallest favours. But “Thou, O LORD, who
Ezek. xxxii. ^{15.} “art a GOD full of compassion and plenteous
13. “in mercy,” and “not willing that any” of thy
Rom. ix. 23. creatures “should perish,” to make known the
riches of thy goodness in the vessels of mercy,
notwithstanding the unworthiness of thy servant,
haſt vouchſafed to comfort him beyond all hu-
man measure or conception; for thy consola-
tions are not as the consolations of men.

4. What, O LORD, have I done, that Thou
ſhouldest bestow upon me any consolation? So
far from being able to recollect the least good-
ness proceeding from myself, I have been always
prone to evil, and sluggish in amendment of life.
It is most true; and I dare not deny it. Should
I fay otherwise, thou wouldest stand in judg-
ment againſt me, and there is none that would
be able to defend my cause. My fins are, in-
deed, ſo numerous, that they have exposed me
to everlasting wrath. I confess, in truth, that
they have rendered me unworthy of the ſociety
of thy faithful ſervants, from which I ought to
be driven as an object of all ſcorn and contempt.
What though it be painful to bear all this againſt
myself, yet, for truth’s fake, I will confess my
fins, that I may the more eaſily obtain mercy at
thy hand.

5. But guilty, and filled with conuifion, what
ſhall I fay? I have power only to utter this

word—"I have sinned, O LORD, I have sinned. " "Have mercy upon me, and forgive me." Bear Pf. li. 1. with me a little while, that I may truly bewail my corruption and misery, "before I go to the Job x. 21. "land of darkness," that is covered with the shadow of death. From a sinner, thus guilty and thus miserable, what dost thou require, but that he should be bruised and humbled in the dust for his faults?

6. In true contrition and humiliation of heart, the hope of pardon hath its birth: the trou- Zech. i. 3. bled conscience is at rest; the grace that was lost is found again; man is delivered from the wrath to come; and GOD and the penitent soul meet together with a holy kiss. The humble Rom. xvi. 16. sorrow of a broken and contrite heart is an ac-
1 Pet. v. 14.
Pf. li. 16. ceptable sacrifice to Thee, O LORD!—and more fragrant in thy sight than clouds of burning incense. It is the precious ointment with which thou desirest to have thy holy feet anointed: a broken and a contrite heart thou hast never despised. *That* is the place of refuge from the wrath of the enemy; and *there* all impurity, both of the flesh and of the spirit, is cleansed and washed away.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

That the Grace of God dwells not with those that love the World.



ON, my grace is precious. It will not be suffered to mingle itself with extraneous matters or worldly consolations. If, therefore, thou desirest to receive this heavenly gift, thou must banish from thy heart every affection that obstructs its entrance.

Matt. vi. 6.

Matt. xiv. 23.

Matt. vi. 24.

1 Pet. ii. 11.

2. Chuse a place of privacy for thyself; delight in retirement and solitude; shun vain discourse: but rather devote thyself to prayer and holy intercourse with GOD, which will increase compunction, and purify thy conscience. Estimate the whole world as nothing: prefer the leisure which gives thee time to serve GOD; for thou canst not have leisure to serve me, while thou seekest delight in the transitory enjoyments of time and sense. Thou must wean thy heart from all human consolation and dependence; and it behoves thee even to be separated from thy most intimate and dearest friends. Thus teacheth the Apostle Peter, who earnestly beseeches the faithful in CHRIST to consider themselves as “strangers and pilgrims” in the world.

3. O, what confidence shall that dying man

possess, whom no worldly affections bind down to this life! But the sensual and sickly soul is not capable of such abstraction; nor can the natural man conceive the power of this heaven-born liberty of spirit. When, however, he wishes to be spiritual, it behoves him to renounce all connections as well remote as near; and to be on his guard against no one so much as **HIMSELF**. When *Self* is once overcome, the conquest of every other evil will be easy. It is true victory to triumph over oneself. He, whose sensual appetite is kept in subjection to the spirit, and the spirit in subjection to my will, . . HE is the true conqueror of himself, and the lord of the whole world.

4. If thou desirest to ascend this height of perfection, thou must manfully set out, and lay the axe to the root, that the inordinate love of self may be cut off, and all desire of personal gratification utterly extirpated. From self-love, as the corrupt stock, are derived those numerous branches which must be radically destroyed; so that, when plucked up by the roots, holiness and peace will continually succeed. But how few labour at this extirpation! How few seek to obtain that divine life, which can only rise from the *death of self*! And thus men are chained down in animal passions, unable to rise by the spirit above the enjoyments of flesh and blood. He that desireth to walk freely with me, must

Rom. viii. 7,
&c.

Matt. x. 37,
&c.

Matt. iii. 10.

endeavour to mortify his depraved and inordinate affections ; and not by a partial fondness, which hath its birth in self-love, adhere to any creature.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Of the different Operations of Nature and Grace.

 Y son, diligently observe the motions of nature and grace ; for they move subtilly and in contrary directions, as not always to be distinguished, but by an illuminated and sanctified spirit. Thus, all men desire the possession of good ; and they pretend that some good is to be found in words or actions ; and, therefore, many are deluded by an *appearance* of good.

2. Nature is crafty : she allures, ensnares, and deceives many ; and hath always herself, as the ultimate end, in view. But grace walks in simplicity and truth ; she “ abstains from all appearance of evil ; ” pretends to no fallacious views ; but acteth from the pure love of GOD, in whom she rests as her supreme and final good.

1 Thes. v. 22. 3. Nature unwillingly contemplates the death of Self : she will not be restrained ; will not be conquered ; will not be subordinate ; but reluc-

tantly obeys when obedience is unavoidable. Grace, on the contrary, is bent on self-mortification ; she resisteth the sensual appetite ; she seeks occasion for subjection ; longs to be subdued, and even uses not the liberty she possesses : she loves to be restrained by discipline ; and, so far from desiring the exercise of dominion, it is her continual wish that she may live, stand, and be, in submission to the will of God ; and, for the sake of God, is disposed to humble herself ^{1 Pet. ii. 13.} under the power of every human being.

4. Nature labours for her own advantage ; and, in her intercourse with others, considers only what she can secure for herself : but grace is wholly inattentive to personal profit and convenience ; rather regarding that which is subservient to the general good. ^{1 Cor. x. 33.}

5. Nature is fond of receiving honour and reverence. Grace faithfully ascribes all honour ^{John v. 41.} and praise to God.

6. Nature dreads ignominy and contempt : but Grace rejoices to suffer reproach for the name ^{Acts v. 41.} of Jesus.

7. Nature loves idleness and bodily rest ; Grace cannot be idle, but willingly embraces labour. ^{1 Cor. xv. 10.}

8. Nature seeks curious and costly clothing, and abhors that which is coarse and vile. Grace delights in plain and humble garments ; not re-

fusing those that are coarse and severe, even to the putting on of rags.

9. Nature regards only temporal things : she is elated with success, and depressed by disappointment ; and irritated at the least word of reproach. But Grace regards only the things which be eternal : she is unmoved either by loss or by gain, and unincensed by the bitterest words, because she placeth her treasure and her joy in an imperishable heaven.

10. Nature is covetous, and grasping at peculiarity of possession ; she more willingly receives than gives. Grace is pious and bountiful to all ; avoids singularity ; is contented with little ;
 Acts xx. 35. and counteth it “ more blessed to give than to “ receive.”

11. Nature is inclined to the creature ; to the gratification of the flesh ; to vanities and irregularities. But Grace draweth to God, and to the practice of virtue ; she renounceth the creature :
 1 John ii. 16. relinquisheth the world ; abhors the indulgences of the flesh ; restrains all wandering desires, and blushes when seen in places of public resort.

12. Nature willingly seeks solace from without, for self gratification : Grace hath no comfort but in God : and, leaving below this visible world, seeks all her delight in the sovereign good.

13. Nature always acts upon principles of self-interest : she does nothing good for its own sake ; but for every benefit conferred, expects

either a present recompence, or such favour and approbation among men as will secure a return for superior good; and desires to have her services and gifts highly esteemed and applauded. Grace seeks nothing temporal; nor expects any other recompence but from God, as “her exceeding great reward.” She has no other temporal interests to secure than such as are necessary to sustain her in her pursuit of eternity.

14. Nature exults in numerous relations and friends; glories in dignity of station, and splendour of descent; fawns upon the powerful; caresses the rich; and applauds those who most resemble herself. But Grace loves her enemies, Luke vi. 27. and therefore is not elated by the number of her friends; she values not the splendour of station, and the nobility of birth, but as they are dignified by superior virtue: she favours the poor, rather than the rich; compassionates the innocent, more than the powerful; rejoices with the lover of truth, and not of falsehood: and continually exhorts even the good, not only to “covet 1 Cor. xii. 31. earnestly the best gifts,” but in “a more excellent way,” to become like the Son of God.

15. Nature, when she feels her want and misery, quickly and bitterly complains: Grace bears want and misery with constancy.

16. Nature refers all excellence to herself; and argues and contends for herself; but Grace refers all things to God, as to the original from

which they emanate. She does not arrogantly presume upon her own wisdom, or her own goodness; she contends not for a preference of her own opinion to that of another, but in every thought and sentiment she submits herself to the correction and guidance of infinite wisdom.

17. Nature seeketh to know secret things, and to hear such as are new: she pretends to demonstrate truth by sensible experiment; she desires to be known, and to act in a manner to secure admiration and applause. But Grace car-
eth not for novelty, and is indifferent about curious matters; she knows that the lust of vain wisdom is derived from the old stock of human corruption; and that there is nothing of novelty and permanency in this sublunary world: she, therefore, restrains the activity of the senses; avoids vain complacency and ostentation; conceals, under the veil of humility, the gifts and graces of THE HOLY SPIRIT; and, in every ob-
servation and discovery, seeks only the fruits of holiness, and the praise and honour of God. She desires that neither herself nor her excellencies may be proclaimed; but that God may be blest and glorified in all his gifts, who, of his pure love and liberality, hath granted us all things.

18. Such is the transcendency of Grace to Nature! Finally, this Grace is the light of heaven; a certain gift of GOD; the peculiar dif-

tinction of the elect, and the pledge of eternal happiness; which raiseth man from earth to heaven, and from carnal to spiritual desires. The more, therefore, Nature is suppressed and subdued, the more Grace is poured into the soul; and with new visitations, by super-added communications of light and strength, “the inward ‘man is, day by day, more and more renewed’” Colos. iii. 13. 2 Cor. iv. 16. after THE IMAGE OF GOD.

CHAPTER L.

Of the Corruption of Nature, and of the Efficacy of Divine Grace.



LORD, my GOD, who didst create me after thine own image and similitude, grant me thy Grace which Thou hast represented as so necessary to my salvation, that my most depraved nature, which is always tending to sin and perdition, may be entirely subdued. I feel myself a law of sin “warring Rom. vii. 23. against the law of my mind, and bringing me “into captivity to the law of sin” in many things; nor am I able to resist such passions, without the assistance of thy most holy grace, warmly infused into my heart.

2. There is need, and great need, of thy grace; that nature, prone from early youth, to Gen. viii. 21.

evil, may be conquered. Fallen, and vitiated
Rom. v. 12. by sin, through the first man, Adam, the punishment of this stain hath descended to all posterity; so that nature, which was created by the good and upright, is now mentioned only to denote corruption; since, left to itself, its motions incline to evil. The small portion of spiritual feeling which remains, is only as a spark concealed in the ashes.

² Mac. iii. 27. This is that natural reason, which, though “ compassed with great darkness,” has yet some cognizance of good and evil, of truth and falsehood; but it is unable to fill every thing of which it approves, nor can it enjoy the full light of truth, nor the soundness of its affections.

^{Rom. vii. 12, 22.} 3. Hence it is, O my God, that, according to the inner man, I am delighted with thy law; knowing thy command to be good, just, and holy; and striving against all evil and sin, as to be shunned. In the flesh, I am a slave to the law of sin; being more in obedience to sensuality than to reason. Hence, I *wish* what is good, but cannot *accomplish* it. Hence, I propose many good things to myself; but because grace is wanting to assist my infirmity, I draw back and become defective from the slightest resistance. Hence too it happens, that, knowing the way of perfection, and seeing clearly how I ought to act, in order to attain it, I am pressed down by

the weight of natural corruption, and do not rise to effect what is perfect.

4. O, how greatly necessary to me, O Lord, is thy grace, to begin, to go on with, and to carry to perfection, what is good: for without it, I am unable to do any one good thing: but John xv. 5. all things with thee are possible — “ thy grace Phil. iv. 13. “ strengthening me.” O truly celestial grace! without which all human merits are as nothing, and the gifts of nature of no avail. O God! what are arts, riches, beauty, strength, talents, or eloquence, with THEE — without Grace? Truly, nothing: for the gifts of nature are common both to the good and to the wicked; but grace or love is the proper gift of the elect: — with which, when distinguished they are deemed deserving of eternal life.

So loftily doth this grace hold its head, that, neither the gift of prophecy, nor the operation of signs, nor any speculation however profound, is worthy of being esteemed ANY THING without it: but neither faith, nor hope, nor any other virtue, are acceptable to thee without charity and grace.

5. O blessed Grace! which maketh the poor Matt. v. 3. in spirit rich in virtues, and which maketh the rich in many things, humble at heart. Come! descend upon me! Fill me, betimes, with thy consolation; lest, through laßitude and hardness of understanding, my soul become faint, I be-

1 Cor. xiii. 1,
&c.

seech thee, O my God! that I may find grace in thy sight: let thy grace alone suffice me, though the calls of nature be not wholly satisfied.

What, though I be tried and vexed by many tribulations, I will not fear evil, while THY GRACE is with me. That grace is my strength, my counsel, and my aid. It is more powerful than all enemies: it is wiser than the collected wisdom of the world.

6. It is the mistress of truth, the teacher of discipline, the light of the heart, the solace when in affliction, the refuge of the distressed, the banisher of fear, the nurse of devotion, and the parent of tears. What should I be without such Grace, but a dry and barren piece of wood, fit only to be cast away as refuse! Let thy grace, O Lord, “ always prevent and follow me;” and make me ever “ to be given to all good works.”

CHAPTER LI.

*We must deny Ourselves, and by means of the Cross
Imitate Christ.*

ON, in proportion to the abandonment of thyself, will be thy advances towards me. As external objects of desire bring not external peace, and as the relinquishing even of the inner man unites us to God, I wish thee to learn and to practise the perfect denial of SELF, in my will, without contradiction or complaint.

Follow me: “I am the way, the truth, and John xiv. 6. the life.” Without the way, there is no journeying; without truth, there is no knowledge: without life, there is no living. I am the way which thou oughtest to follow: the truth, which thou shouldest believe: the life, which thou shouldest hope for. I am the inviolable way; the infallible truth; the life interminable. I am the truly right way, the supreme truth, the true life, the happy life, the life uncreate. Continue only in my way, and thou shalt know the truth, and “the truth shall make you free,” and thou shalt lay hold of eternal life.

2. “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Matt. xix. 17. commandments.” If thou wilt know the

Matt. xix. 21. truth, believe me. “ If thou wilt be perfect, “ sell all that thou hast.” If thou wilt be my

Matt. xvi. 24. disciple, “ deny thyself.” If thou wouldest enjoy a happy life, despise this present life. If thou wouldest be exalted in heaven, humble thyself upon earth. If thou wouldest reign with me, carry my cross with me; for the servants of the cross alone find a life of felicity and of true light.

3. Lord JESUS, since thy way is “ the narrow way,” and that which is despised by the world, grant me to IMITATE THYSELF, and, with it, to possess the contempt of the world: for “ the servant is not greater than his Lord, nor is the disciple above his master.” Let thy servant exercise himself in thy life, for therein is my salvation and true holiness. Whatsoever I read or hear beyond it, neither recreates nor delights me.

John xiii. 17. 4. Son, “ thou hast known and read these things—happy art thou if thou do them. He

John xiv. 21. “ that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and I will love him, and manifest myself unto him;” and I

Rev. iii. 21. will make him to sit down with me in the kingdom of my Father.

5. Lord JESUS! be it as thou hast said and promised; and let it happen unto me to be worthy of its enjoyment. From thy hand, have I received the cross; I have carried, and will

carry it, even unto death. The life of a good man is the cross, which leads him into paradise. That life is begun ; let it not retrograde, nor be abandoned. Take courage, my brethren : let us march on together : Christ is with us. On His account have we taken up the cross : on *his* account let us persevere in it. He, our leader, who hath gone before us, will be our helper. Behold, our King, who will fight for us, marches before us. Let us manfully follow him ; let no one fear terror ; let us be prepared to die bravely in battle ; nor let us suffer our glory to be tarnished by a cowardly desertion of the cross.

CHAPTER LII.

That a Man should not be too much dejected, when he falls into some Defects.



ON, patience and humility in adversity please me more than much comfort and devotion in prosperity. Why should a small thing, said, or done, against thee, make thee sad ? Even were it of magnitude, thou shouldest not be moved. Let it pass away ; for if thou livest long, thou wilt find it to be neither a new, nor the first, nor the last thing, done or said against thee. Thou art sufficiently stout of heart, when thou hast nothing to oppose thee.

Thou knowest how to counsel and to strengthen others with words:—but let sudden tribulation only step over thy threshold, and thou art wanting both in counsel and in courage. Attend to thy great frailty, which thou more frequently findest in trifling difficulties: which nevertheless, when they *do* come to pass, happen for thy safety and instruction.

2. Banish them, the best thou canst from thy bosom: and if they have affected thee, let them not depress thee, nor for a long time involve thee. Bear small things patiently, if thou canst not joyfully. Even shouldest thou be an unwilling hearer of them, so that thy indignation is excited, yet repress thyself: nor suffer any thing unseemly to escape thy lips, lest the young and unsuspecting be shocked. Sudden excitation is quickly subdued; and internal grief shall be softened by returning grace. I yet live (faith the Lord,) prepared to help thee; and with more than accustomed kindness to comfort thee, if thou wilt trust in me, and devoutly call upon me.

Baruch iv. xii.

3. Be of an even mind: and gird on thy courage to bear greater hardships. All is not endured in vain, even if thou shouldest be conscious of more frequent tribulation, or of more violent temptation.

Thou art Man, and not God:

Thou art Flesh, not an Angel.

How canst thou possibly always remain in the

same state of virtue, when this was denied to an angel in Heaven, and to the first man in Paradise? I am He who raise up and preserve the mournful: and those, who are conscious of their infirmities, I draw towards the participation of my divine comforts.

4. Lord, blessed be thy word: sweeter is it Ps. cxix. 103. to my mouth than honey or the honeycomb. What should I have done in these my afflictions and tribulations, unless thou hadst comforted me with thy holy word? What matters it, therefore, what I suffer 'till I reach the goal of my salvation? Grant me, O God, an exemplary end: a happy departure out of this world. Think upon me, O my God! and direct me in the right road of thy kingdom. Amen.

CHAPTER LIII.

*The deeper Things and hidden Judgments of God
are not to be scrutinized.*

ON, beware of disputing about the deep matters and hidden judgments of the Almighty:—as, why this man is apparently abandoned, and that man receives so much favour—why such an one is afflicted, and such an one is so conspicuously exalted. Such dispensations are beyond finite discernment; nor

does any process of reasoning or of judgment avail in the solution of divine decrees. When therefore an enemy throws out any sceptical doubts or suggestions, or curious men bring forward their enquiries, upon these matters, answer

Ps. cxix. 137.
Ps. xix. 9.

them in the words of the Psalmist ; “ Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments : the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” “ My judgments (saith the Almighty,) are to be feared, not discussed ; for they are past finding out” by human understanding.

Rom. xi. 33.

2. Do not enquire or dispute respecting the relative merits of the Saints, or who shall be holier, or greater, than another, in the kingdom of Heaven. Such disquisitions too frequently generate strifes and useless contentions : they also nourish pride and vain glory : whence arise envyings and dissensions—whilst one strives stubbornly to give the preference to this man, and another to that man, on the score of sanctity. A love of such investigations produces no fruit, but is rather displeasing to the Saints : for I am not

Tit. iii. 9.

1 Cor. xiv. 33.

the God of dissension but of peace ; which peace abideth the rather in true humility than in self-exaltation.

3. Some, from an excess of zeal, are drawn towards these, or those, with more marked affection—but it is rather from a human, than a divine, impulse. I am HE who establish all the

Matt. xxviii.

^{1.}
2 Tim. ii. 23.

Saints. I have endowed with grace, and dealt out glory. I have known the merits of each; and have “ prevented them with the blessings ^{Ps. lxxxiii. 11.} of my goodness.” I have previously known the elect for ages: I have set them apart from ^{John xv. 16.} the world — they have not pre-elected me. I ^{19.} have called them by my grace, and have drawn them to me by my mercy. I have led them and sustained them through various temptations. I have infused into them great comforts: I have given them perseverance, and have crowned their patience.

4. The first and the last among them are equally the objects of my recognition. My love, which is inestimable, is extended to all alike. I am equally praised by all my Saints. I am ^{Ps. cl. 6.} blessed above all things, and honoured by each —whom I have predestinated and magnified, without any preference as to their individual merits. He who despises one of the least, honours ^{Matt. xviii. 10.} not one of the greatest, of my Saints: for it is I who have created both the least and the greatest. And he who derogates from any one of the Saints, derogates from me, and from all the rest in the kingdom of Heaven. All are as ONE — connected by the common bond of charity: they think and will the same thing: and all love each ^{John xvii. 21.} other as if they were one common family.

5. Hitherto, indeed, they do that which is much more difficult: they love me beyond

themselves and their own merits ; for, ravished beyond themselves, as it were, and carried beyond self-love, they go on relying upon my affections, upon which they may confidently and profitably repose. Nothing can change or depress them ; for, full of eternal truth, they glow with the fire of inextinguishable love. Let carnally-minded men, therefore, cease to make enquiries respecting the state of the Blessed : those, who have no affections beyond their carnal gratifications. They diminish or add, as they please ; but not in consonance with eternal truth.

6. Ignorance abounds in many ; and especially in those, who, little or none illuminated, rarely know how to love any one with spiritual affection. Many are drawn this way and that, from their natural affections, and from human friendship ; and as their notions are formed among earthly connections, so would they judge of heavenly : but immense is the distance between the thoughts of the imperfect, and of those, who judge of matters by a heavenly revelation.

7. Beware then, my Son, of an over curiosity in those enquiries and pursuits which exceed the limits of thy knowledge : but rather keep thy mind and heart intent upon this—that thou mayest become the least in the kingdom of heaven. And if any one be anxious to know who is holier, or greater, than another, in the kingdom of heaven, what can such knowledge profit

him?—unless, in consequence, he humble himself before me, and rise from his state of humiliation more deeply impressed with the praises of my name. HE is more acceptable to God, who thinks the more of his sins and the less of his virtues, and at what immense distance he yet remains from the purity of the Saints—than *he* who is constantly disputing about their relative precedence. Better is it, with devout prayers and penitent tears, to supplicate the Saints, and to implore their interposition, with a humble mind, than to scrutinise into the secret things, appertaining to them, with a vain curiosity.

8. They are well and best contented, when men know to be content themselves, and to repress their vain discourse. They never boast of their merits; because, arrogating nothing to themselves, they attribute every thing to me, since I have given every thing out of my infinite regard towards them. Such is their love of the Divinity, and such is the superfluity of their joy, that, there is not the slightest deficiency either of their glory or of their happiness. All the Saints, the higher their glory, the greater their humility of heart; and they fall down upon their faces before the Lamb, and adore him for ever and ever.

9. Many seek to know who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven, while they themselves are not worthy of being compared with the

Rev. iv. 10;
v. 14.

Isaiah lx. 22;
lxv. 20.

least. Great and glorious would it be, indeed, to become the least in the kingdom of Heaven, where *all* are great ; for all shall be called, and

shall be, the sons of God. “ A little one shall “ become a thousand ; ” and the sinner “ of a “ hundred years old ” shall die. When the Disci-

ples asked who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, they received the following answer :

Matt. xviii.
3, 4.

“ Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, “ and become as little children, ye shall not “ enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Whoso- “ ever therefore shall humble himself as this “ little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom “ of heaven.”

Luke vi. 24.

10. Woe be to those, who disdain spontaneously to humble themselves as little children ; since the lowly gate of the kingdom of Heaven will not allow them to enter therein. Woe to the wealthy, who have their comforts in this world : for while the poor are entering into the kingdom of heaven, they shall stand without, howling. Rejoice ye humble, and exalt ye poor ; for your’s is the kingdom of Heaven, if ye only walk in the truth.

Luke vi. 20.
3 John i. 4.

CHAPTER LIV.

All Hope and Trust are to be placed in God alone.



ORD, what is my trust in this life? or what my solace under every object beneath the sun? Is it not THOU, my Lord God, whose mercies are not to be numbered? Where did it fare well with me without THEE? and when could harm happen to me when thou wert present? I would be rather poor on account of Thee, than rich without Thee. I would rather be a wanderer upon earth with Thee, than an inhabitant of Heaven without Thee. But wheresoever Thou art, it is Heaven; and death and hell are where thou art not. Thou art my desire and my hope; and thus I exclaim, pray, and groan in spirit, after Thee. In no one can I place a full confidence, to be relieved in my necessities, but in Thee alone, my God. Thou art my hope, my trust; my comforter and my faithful guide in all things.

2. "All seek their own." Thou watchest Philip. ii. 21. over my safety in all my outgoings and incom-
ings, and convertest every thing to my good. Rom. viii. 28. Even shouldest thou expose me to numerous temptations and hardships, it is only for my good; and after thy accustomed manner of prov-

ing thy beloved by a thousand trials, in which trials Thou art not less to be loved and lauded, than if thou hadst filled me with celestial consolations.

3. In Thee alone, therefore, O Lord God, I place all my hope and refuge; all my tribulation and anguish; for every thing, in which I do not behold thy presence and power, I find to be infirm and unstable. Many friends profit not; powerful auxiliaries aid not; prudent counsellors give no useful answer; nor learned books, consolation; nor precious substance, freedom; nor a secret nor a pleasant recess, safety;—if THOU, THYSELF, aid not, succour not, comfort not, instruct and preserve not.

4. For all things, which seem to make for peace and happiness, are nothing without Thee; nor afford any happiness by the truths which they impart. Thou art the end of all good, and the height of life, and the depth of all wise discourse; and to hope in Thee above all things is the firmest consolation of thy servants. Mine eyes turn to Thee; in Thee do I trust, my God, the Father of all mercies.

5. Bless and sanctify my soul with celestial benediction; that thy habitation—the seat of thy eternal glory—may come! Nor let any thing be found in the temple of thy dignity, which may offend the eye of thy Majesty. According to the greatness of thy goodness, and

Heb. vi. 18,

&c.

Ps. xxv. 1, 2.

St. Augustin
“upon
Time,”

according to the multitude of thy mercies, look upon me; and hear the prayer of thy poor servant wailing in the valley of the shadow of death. Protect and preserve the soul of thy mean and abject Servant, 'midst so many vicissitudes of this contemptible life; and, thy grace attending, direct him, through the paths of peace, to the land of everlasting light. Amen.

CHAPTER LV.

Against the Vanity of the World.

JO mingle with the world is sometimes a hazardous and a serious matter: for chastity is often endangered by endearments, humility by wealth, piety by business, truth by much talking, and charity by malignity of heart. As it is difficult to preserve the fair fruit of a tree, growing by the way side, to maturity, so is it difficult for a man, plunged in the vortex of society, to preserve justice inviolate to the last.

St. Chrysost.
39th Homily
on imperfect
Works.

2. O, how blind are those who seek only worldly glory! What is this world's joy, but unpunished wickedness? — namely, luxuriousness, inebriety, idle feasting, tending to vanities; and such things are endured without reprimand or correction. The evil ones think that they

St. Austin.

are safe in their enjoyments, when they are not corrected for their iniquities; but they know not that nothing is more miserable than their happiness, by which they incur the punishment of a weak soul, and by which a bad will is engendered and strengthened.

3. If thou shouldest seek after a Dignitary, and shouldest say, I propose to live virtuously and holily therein, I applaud the resolution: but rarely do I find the result correspondent with it. It is a shocking thing to see a mean spirit pervading a lofty situation: dignity, of the first order, with conduct of the lowest description; a great authority with an unstable resolution.

St. Bernard.

Such Dignitaries indeed are worthy of those torments which they present as examples of perdition to those who are subjected to their discipline.

James iii. 15.

4. If thou seekest the wisdom of the world, to what danger dost thou expose thyself!—for, the wisdom of the world is “earthly, sensual, devilish,” inimical to salvation, the suffocator of life, the mother of desire. If perchance thou lovest the wealth of the world, the pomp of life, and the delights of the flesh, only consider how frail and perishable they are—for every thing earthly passeth away like a dream.

5. What profiteth such votaries, the pride of which they are so fond, and the wealth of which they so much boast? All things pass

away like a shadow, and like a ship — which, sailing over the face of the waters, leaves not its track behind. All things are consumed as it were by their own malignity ; and alas ! how many there are, who leave no traces of virtue behind !

6. Where be now those Princes, who “ruled Baruch iii. 16, 18.
“the beasts upon the earth ?” — who treasured up hoards of gold and silver, built cities and camps, and conquered only by the overthrowing of kings and kingdoms ! Where is the wife ? ^{1 Cor. i. 20.} Where is the scribe ? Where is the disputer of this world ? Where is the beauteous Absalom ? the powerful Alexander ? the strong Samson ? the brave Cæsars ? the famous Kings and Princes of old ?

7. What hath empty glory, short-lived mirth, worldly power, great family alliance, carnal pleasure, the deceitfulness of riches, the suavity of concupiscence — what have each and all these profited ? What has become of laughter, joy, ^{Eccles. ii. 2.} boasting, arrogance ? Where is pride of pedigree, and beauty of person ? Alas ! all these have proved treacherous ; have vanished away : have become annihilated. Nothing of them is left ; not one trace of them can be discerned from the perished relics of all other things. The very bodies of those, who were once vain-glorious of such acquisitions, have become putrid — eaten through by worms. Their souls are in paradise

. . . or in the purgatory of those punishments which they have deserved.

18. Let us cast away therefore all external and earthly objects; let us follow all internal and spiritual ones: that we may return with our whole hearts unto God, and “be converted and “live.” And let us “do the will” of HIM, to whom alone be all glory and honour and grace, and who is at once the beginning, the middle, and the end, of our internal consolation. Amen.

THE END.



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